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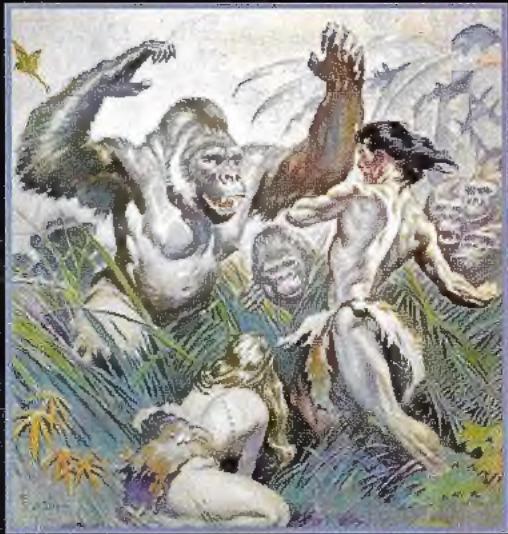


# Scarlet Street

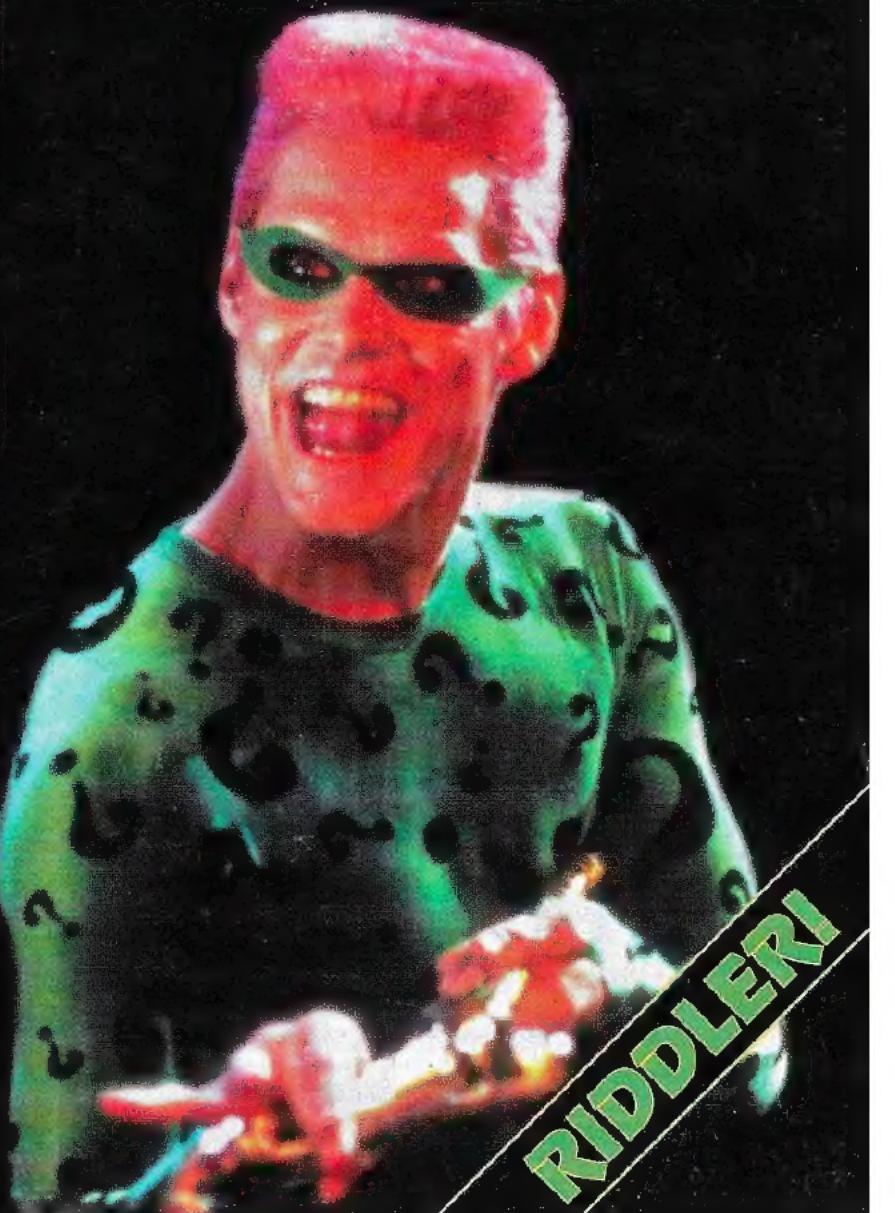
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**COVER: SPIDER-MAN**, Frank Frazetta's *The Son of Tarzan*, and Jim Carrey as the Riddler in **BATMAN FOREVER**

# Scarlet Letters

Thank you from the bottom of my liver for the tasty Tooms interview in SS #16. I had a blast doing it and more fun reading it and showing it to my Grandma. She disapproved of all the bile—I mean, vile "F" words I used and gave me hell. So, tired of her whining, I took out her liver and ate it in a holiday dish. I guess you could say I delivered Granny to an early grave. (Just kidding! I love you, Granny Tooms.)

I'd like to urge all X-Philes who would like to see the return of Eugene Victor Tooms in a future episode of THE X-FILES to flood Chris Carter and/or Glen Morgan with buttloads of request letters. Eugene lives!

I think your mag is terrific, *Scarlet Street*, even though you had boring old Tom Cruise on the cover and not me. Liver die in '95. Happy Goo Year!

Doug Hutchison  
Beverly Hills, CA

Since the entire staff of *Scarlet Street* hungers for the return of Tooms, we urge readers to send their requests to Chris Carter (Bldg. #49) or Glen Morgan (Bldg. #307), 20th Century Fox, 10201 West Pico Boulevard, Los Angeles, California, 90035. Who would ever have thought we'd be beggin' for liver!

After receiving issue #17, I decided it was high time I wrote to tell you how much your magazine means to me, a fan of the type of films you showcase.

Unfortunately, I did not start with you until issue #11. I just happened to be in a local magazine/newspaper shop when I spotted a photo of Shelley Winters with the caption "Shelley Tells All!" next to "Scarlet Street" in large, bold type. Of course, I picked up the magazine, briefly perused it, and knew I had to have it.

I have to let you know how I feel about this truly terrific treasure trove titled *Scarlet Street*. What a dream magazine! I haven't felt this strongly about a publication since the original

Famous Monsters of Filmland, and I bought my first issue of that one back in 1966 at the age of nine!

Not only are your articles and photographs gems in themselves, your celebrity interviews are the best I've ever read! I particularly enjoyed the interviews with Vincent Price, John Moulder-Brown, Peter Cushing, Joan Bennett, Beverly Garland, Shelley Winters, Ruth Roman, Acquanetta, Jack Grinnage, Gary Conway, and my two all-time favorite teen idols who costarred in THE GHOST IN THE INVISIBLE BIKINI, Tommy Kirk and Aron Kincaid. Take me back to my childhood, brothers and sisters!!!

Your coverage of such screen gems as HORRORS OF THE BLACK MUSEUM, CIRCUS OF HORRORS, ATLANTIS THE LOST CONTINENT, TEENAGERS FROM OUTER SPACE, and CREATURE OF DESTRUCTION (by Aron Kincaid himself!) has left me salivating for more, more, more!!!



There are several films I'd like to see covered in your periodical, two in particular: MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD (1935) and THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE (1944). I have tried to persuade a local theater at which I am a volunteer to screen the latter during Christmastide, as it contains one of the most beautiful and poignant Christmas scenes ever put on film, but because of the lurid title I cannot get my point across. Instead, they will show films such as THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER or THE LITTLE PRINCESS.

I truly cannot thank all of you involved with *Scarlet Street* enough for publishing this marvelous magazine! If you only knew how much it means to your faithful readers to either pick up the latest issue at the newsstand or have it arrive in the mail, you will never, ever consider termination. Please keep up the excellent work!

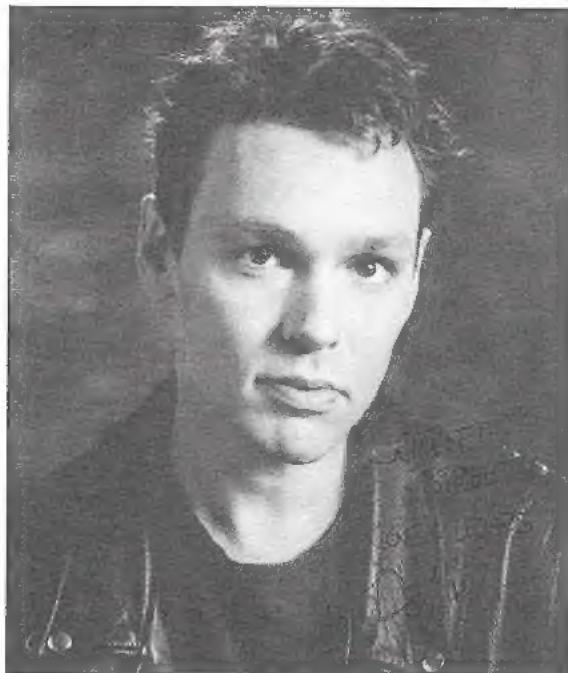
William K. Knotts  
Parkersburg, WV

Allow me to lend praise to your fine magazine. Although the magazine could use better reproduction of the many wonderful photos you include, the articles are, for the most part, extremely well-informed and written with much energy.

I only wish, as a 40-year-old baby boomer, there had been such a magazine when I was growing up and reveling in CHILLER THEATRE in my hometown of Columbus, Ohio. Alas, we had only a silly magazine crowded with lots of photos and puns but nothing more. I think you know of whom I speak!

Bill Whitaker  
Abilene, TX  
Musically speaking, Bill was recently instrumental (whoops—a

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Doug Hutchison

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**LIFE RETURNS** (1934) Onslow Stevens, Valerie Hobson. Although Denis Gifford spoke highly of this rare film, it is actually a classic case of inflated reputation. Stevens plays a doctor who revives his son's dead dog with the help of a badly spliced clip of actual research. From a good video master. **\$11.95**

**DR. MABUSE, THE GAMBLER** (1922) Rudolf Klein-Rogge, Bernhard Goetzke. Super-criminal Mabuse is out to make a fortune and run Berlin. Detective Wenk (Goetzke) is out to stop him. A great tangled web of criminal deceit. This film is in two feature length parts. Part two follows. **\$11.95**



**WAXWORKS** (1924) Werner Krauss. Paul Leni's first film is a compendium of stories, and more than a little reminiscent of Fritz Lang's *Destry* (1921). The wax figures in a museum each get to tell their story. The surviving print of this film is grainy but watchable. For collectors only. **\$11.95**

**KRIEMHILD'S REVENGE** (1924) Rudolf Klein-Rogge. With Siegfried murdered in the last reel of the preceding film, his widow, Kriemhild, vows vengeance on his murderers. To accomplish this, she enlists the aid of Attila the Hun (Rogge), who marries her and fathers a child. Kriemhild gets her revenge, but loses everything in its pursuit. **\$11.95**

**SPIES** (1928) Gerda Maurus, Rudolf Klein-Rogge. This is one of Fritz Lang's most overlooked films, yet it is just as good as much of his earlier work. Klein-Rogge is villain Haghia—a man who leads a double life, dabbling in a circus but running a huge crime syndicate. This film has a great start and a snappy finale, but it's sometimes a little draggy in the middle. **\$11.95**

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**THE SHOCK** (1923)/**BY THE SUN'S RAYS** (1914) Lon Chaney. Two Chaney films (both from 16mm prints) for the price of one! In *The Shock*, a crippled Wilse Dilling must betray the woman he loves to avoid the vengeance of a crime boss. *By the Sun's Rays* is the oldest surviving Chaney film that is complete. This is a new 16mm print which is the best available anywhere. **\$14.95**

**DESTINY** (Der Mude Tod) (1921) Lil Dagover, Bernhard Goetzke. We finally found a decent print of this film. It's still a bit murky, but much cleaner than any other print. Dagover's lover dies and she pleads with Death (Goetzke) to return her betrothed. He responds with a challenge: if she can save just one of three doomed men from their fate, she can have her wish. **\$14.95**

**THE PASSION OF JOAN OF ARC** (1928) Directed by Carl Dreyer. It's hard to find Dreyer's films (except *Vampyr* and *Day of Wrath*) but they are always worth seeing. Many critics have said that Renee Falconetti's performance is among the finest ever committed to film. Watch for the typical Dreyer touches with lighting and camera work here. From a rare 16mm print. **\$14.95**

**DER GOLEM** (1920) Paul Wegener, Lyda Salmonova. A rabbi creates a giant clay statue and, through sorcery, brings it to life in order to help the troubled Jews in Prague. It eventually causes more trouble than good, but the rabbi has difficulty destroying it. This is a sequel to the 1914 film of the same title, and it is an early classic of the German silent film. The mannerisms of the Golem are said to be the inspiration for Boris Karloff's portrayal of the monster in *Frankenstein* (1931). From a good 16mm print. **\$14.95**

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—Forrest J Ackerman

This classy publication appeals to a wide audience . . . a sophisticated voice . . .

—Axcess

. . . a must for anyone interested in Sherlock Holmes, Charlie Chan, Batman, Abbott and Costello . . . they're all here in this beautifully produced black-and-white magazine.

—*Magazines of the Movies*

Everything about *Scarlet Street* appeals to the perverse lust for lunacy in me. Congratulations on a job well done.

—Rex Reed

Good columns and superior writing mark *Scarlet Street*.

—*Baby Boomer Collectibles*

*Scarlet Street* is a delight!

—George Baxt

*Scarlet Street* is an attractive and entertaining magazine . . .

—Ellen Datlow

—*The Year's Best Fantasy and Horror*

. . . very pleasantly surprised . . . The layout is great—easy on the eye, with a perfect balance between pictures and text.

—F. Paul Wilson

The standard of writing is above average and the number of interviews with actors in old films and TV series is unequalled by any other mag.

—*Film Review*

It's truly a terrific magazine! I don't know how you manage to pack so much in one issue. If you can't find something you like in this publication, you might as well give up.

—Neal Barrett, Jr.

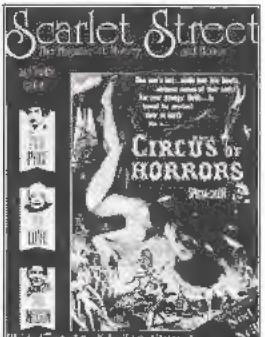
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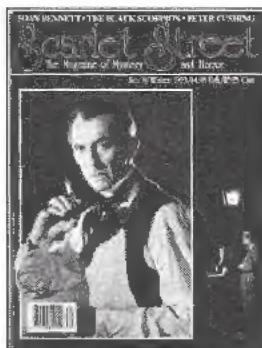
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## SCARLET LETTERS

*Continued from page 4*

punt!) in recording two new collections of music from classic Universal horror films. For more info, turn to page 82.

■

Enjoyed the article on Dabbs Greer in Issue #17, but you neglected to mention one of his best clergyman roles: the bogus priest in an episode of THE INVADERS. Although I have not seen the show since its original broadcast, I still recall Greer's smarmy and sinister intonation of "Delighted to see you again, my son!" as our hero realizes the good father is celestial but not heavenly in origin.

Henry Nicolella  
Syracuse, NY

■

As a major fan of Gary Conway (in or out of Teenage Frankenstein makeup), I must commend you on the excellence of Scarlet Street #17—especially the cover.

Jack Stalnaker  
Houston, TX  
Jack is proprietor of the nonexistent Meeker Museum, dedicated to the career of Ralph Meeker, and publisher of its suitably bizarre newsletter.

■

Once you start reading Scarlet Street, it is impossible to put it down, and I always finish it in one continuous sitting! But Eddie Cahn bashing seems to be "in" (SS #17), and I think a few things need to be mentioned.

Edward L. Cahn started his career in the silent days working with Nazimova, and in 1926 became head film editor at Universal. He was a fine craftsman who edited and revised ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT on a train from Los Angeles to New York, removing the ZaSu Pitts footage and substituting newly shot Beryl Mercer footage in time for the Eastern premiere. (Preview audiences had laughed at comedienne Pitts in a dramatic role, forgetting her great work in GREED, LAZYBONES, et al.)

Cahn directed the memorable LAW AND ORDER at Universal, with Walter Huston and Harry Carey, and the prison drama LAUGHTER IN HELL with Pat O'Brien, also AFRAID TO TALK with Edward Arnold and RADIO PATROL with Robert Armstrong. Moving to Metro Goldwyn Mayer, Cahn worked on short subjects, including the CRIME DOES NOT PAY series,

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and directed MAIN STREET AFTER DARK, with Edward Arnold, Audrey Totter, and Dan Duryea.

Cahn had started John Huston on his writing career and took him to England, where Cahn directed DEATH DRIVES THROUGH, returning to Hollywood to direct a series of action and suspense dramas. Always wanting to produce as well as direct, Cahn spurned major company offers for independent work, which probably hurt his career. He helped build American International Pictures by directing GIRLS IN PRISON, THE SHE CREATURE, VOODOO WOMAN, SHAKE RATTLE AND ROCK, JET ATTACK, RUNAWAY DAUGHTERS, and INVASION OF THE SAUCER-MEN, then moved to Edward Small with a long term deal.

Eddie Cahn will be remembered as a fine craftsman, loyal to the producer and budget, who always brought a film in on time, and a director beloved by his cast and crew.

Alex Gordon  
Flying A Pictures, Inc.  
Studio City, CA

■

*Continued on page 10*

# Frankly Scarlet



Well, it's official—the space program is back in business, and we have House Speaker Newt Gingrich and his Contract on America to thank for it!

Speaking (isn't he always?) before the National Space Society, the Newtster proposed a trip to Mars as both a marital and an economic boon—marital because of the great fun in having one's "honeymoon in weightlessness," and economic because the prospect of saving dough is the only way Newt can get anyone to listen to him.

"This year we should pass a tax shelter on all profits made in space," he enthused, "This is an incentive to improve humankind and improve incomes."

All in all, it sounds like a pretty good deal. The Gingrich Gang is already doing its damndest to make life on This Island Earth a cultural wasteland, so there ought to be a long, long line of people eager to get off the planet.

Pioneer that he is, I think Newt should be the first to visit Mars—and since he obviously has honeymoons on the mind, I'd like to suggest that he make his first stop in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn. Let ol' Newt talk for five minutes to a certain Mr. Kramden, and he'll be well on his way to outer space.

Bang! Zoom!

\*\*\*

Further to the subject above, Clarence Williams III (he of THE MOD SQUAD) had a few words to say when *Scarlet Street* scribe Michael R. Thomas met him at a screening of TALES FROM THE HOOD:

"Gingrich has come out against public funding of PBS. His rationale is that, since we have A&E on cable, PBS is unnecessary. He never factored in the idea that many people don't have and can't afford cable, but they still have children and they need these things. Some of Gingrich's conservative colleagues come from small towns which have only low-watt transmitting stations and the only cul-

tural programming comes from public-funded TV. If we can fund VOICE OF AMERICA, which propagandizes the U.S.A. abroad, we can afford PBS so that our youngsters can get political figures in discussion as well as performances by our most magnificent artists."

As the Mod Ones used to say, "Solid!"

\*\*\*

Still speaking of tiny critters—and big critters, too—I hereby devote *Scarlet Street* #18 to animal lovers everywhere. I hadn't intended it, but as this issue came together I noticed quite a few articles featuring our furry friends. There's a piece by John Brunas on BLACK ZOO, for instance, and Paul M. Jensen's examination of S. S. Van Dine's Philo Vance points out that



Pussies Galore!

the best of the Vance mysteries is THE KENNEL MURDER CASE. Interviews with Michael Gough and Herman Cohen cover not only BLACK ZOO, but KONGA and BER-SERK! (with its coterie of four-footed circus stars) as well. The Wolf Man howls anew in Richard Scrivani's melodic musings on Universal's horror scores. Then there's the spider and the bat—THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN and BATMAN FOREVER—and a whole menagerie of beasties, courtesy of Edgar Rice Burroughs.

Lest this sound far too bucolic for you crime-craving Scarlet Streeters, let me quickly point out that the animal kingdom has its full quota of violence. Why, only yesterday I read in the newspaper—and I'm not kidding, here, gang—I read in the newspaper that a cow had stepped on a loaded rifle and shot another poor cow in the head!

If you ask me, I think Farmer Brown's chickens framed her.

Yes, ma'am, that's right—Murder Most Fowl!

\*\*\*

It's funny—but, for some strange reason, I suddenly thought of Harry Ackerman . . . .

\*\*\*

I make no secret of the fact that, had it not been for the original *Famous Monsters of Filmland*, I doubt I'd be editing a magazine of mystery and horror today. *Famous Monsters* warmed my cockles back in those cold-war days of the late '50s and early '60s, but I'd be amiss if I said it was the only mag to fire my fiendish imagination. (I'd also be amiss if I wore a blonde wig and an angora sweater, but somebody beat me to it.)

In point of fact, there were two monster mags that I craved every morsel as much as FM—namely, Calvin T. Beck's *Castle of Frankenstein* and Paul Blaisdell's *Fantastic Monsters of the Films*. FM aside, they were the only horror mags with personalities all their own, and personality—a sense of unity, of fun, of writers and readers being members of the same family—is something that I value in a mag at least as much as the information it imparts.

Blaisdell's friend and coworker, Bob Burns, is scheduled to pop up soon in our pages, and he'll have lots to say about *Fantastic Monsters*—but this issue features excerpts from an article that first ran in *Castle of Frankenstein*, way, way back in 1964. When we contacted best-selling author and Edgar Rice Burroughs expert Richard A. Lupoff about contributing a piece to SS, he kindly suggested that we publish his original CoF article, combined with a recent reminiscence written for Gary Lovisi's indispensable *Paperback Parade*. Naturally, we jumped at the chance!

So, for those of you who recall when this article first saw print a mere 31 years ago, here's a chance to swing down Memory Lane. And for those who missed it—hell, for those who were still members of the egg and sperm set—you're in for a treat!

\*\*\*

*Richard Valley*

P.S. Speaking of Mars, there isn't an actor on television doing a better job than *PICKET FENCES'* Ray Walston. For Pete's sake, give the man an Emmy! Solid!

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### SCARLET LETTERS

*Continued from page 8*

I was surprised when I picked up the copy of *Scarlet Street* #17. I figured it was just another monster mag. When I read the article on Jan Murray and the interview with Don Johnson, I realized I had found a treasure.

Rod Polasky  
Los Angeles, CA

Lucifer's beard, but #17 was an unparalleled delight, from Teenage Frankenstein's grisly avocado countenance to the final paragraph of Paul M. Jensen's insightful analysis of THE SKULL, and all the good things betwixt.

As an ardent Dabbs Greer booster (I'm equally passionate about the late, great Woodrow Parfrey), I was pleased to see him interviewed at length. It's always refreshing to hear from someone who has been around awhile; though never an A-list player, the man's career spans half a century and Richard Valley's interview was a fitting tribute. (One suggestion: Malcolm McDowell as the titular hero in THE DABBS GREER STORY.)

I still remember watching what must have been Sal Mineo's last filmed performance, as an amoral

terrorist on the debut episode of SWAT. He radiated pure menace in a part for which he was clearly overqualified, and I think even got to kill Phil Silvers. (It was a long time ago.) I was 15 when Mineo was murdered, and when I passed the news on to one of my teachers, the man remarked "Who? He can't have been anybody if I've never heard of him." I cannot presently recall that gentleman's name.

Of course, it's always nice to hear from Jan Murray, the King of the Anecdote, who I had the pleasure of seeing live 10 years ago when he opened for Steve and Edie at the Palace Theater in New Haven. I wish he'd had time and space to discuss his participation in the 1973 caper film, DAY OF THE WOLVES, which I suspect may have influenced Quentin Tarantino's RESERVOIR DOGS, and afforded Murray the opportunity to portray a criminal mastermind masquerading as the Mr. Rogers-like host of an afternoon kiddie show.

Richard Harland Smith  
New York, NY

Thank you for the fine article on Dwight Frye (SS #16), one of many actors I've been trying to get information on. After reading his

story, I feel proud I am a fan of Dwight—and not because he was the same religion as I am, a Christian Science believer. I respect him for being a great unsung actor. I do believe he should be among such kings of horror as Lugosi, Karloff, Price, Lorre, and the Chaney's. Dwight good, like good wine!

Kim Kruithoff  
Sioux City, IA

I had never heard of your magazine until last week. I was walking through the local book store and, lo and behold, there it was!

I am extremely impressed with your magazine and its presentation. You really do a lot of research and there is loads of information. I especially loved the article on INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE (SS #16)—very well-written and the humor was great! My husband loves THE X-FILES, so he immediately grabbed that article.

Keep up the excellent work.  
Rebecca Wolder  
San Diego, CA

I enjoy reading your magazine, but I was offended by something that Robert Alan Crick wrote in his article on THE NIGHT STALKER in Scarlet Street #16.

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In parentheses, Crick writes that Ron Updyke is probably "one of those," meaning that Ron is gay.

First of all, I am a gay man and I don't fit any prissy stereotype, and I know plenty of other gay men who don't fit it, either. Describing us as "one of those" is woefully out-of-date, and also encourages hate crimes. Sadly, a lot of ignorant people hate and revile gay men for no reason at all.

I know that the line "I'm not one of those, either" was uttered in a Kolchak episode, but to use it again to describe Ron was pretty offensive, not to mention tacky.

Cy Gaffney, Jr.  
Chicago, IL

The parenthetical phrase that offended you, Cy, was not part of Robert Alan Crick's original manuscript. It was added, and relegated not only to parentheses, but kept in quotes, to show that this was Kolchak's attitude toward both Ron and (as you yourself point out) gays in general. Scarlet Street takes pride in being carried in many gay book stores, and we'd be the last genre mag to deliberately offend our gay readers. As for gay men who don't conform to "prissy stereotypes," we never call them "one of those." We call 'em "movie stars."



Everyone balked at Tom Cruise playing Anne Rice's beloved Lestat, but overlooked the fact that Louis, not Lestat, is the novel's hero. And so it is with the movie. Brad Pitt's Louis is the very heart and soul of *INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE*. His moving performance symbolizes the novel's despair, loneliness, guilt, and sexual longing. It's not just Pitt's luminous gaze and soft-spoken delivery, but also his painstaking understanding of the role, that makes his Louis so memorable.

Opposite Pitt, Cruise's talents are more limited than ever, and Pitt, already one of current cinema's most ravishing men, has now become one of its most interesting actors.

Marisol Lake  
Ontario, Canada

Just wanted to write and let you know that I'm a bit disappointed with the "tribute" afforded Peter Cushing in the latest issue of *Scarlet Street* (SS #16). I realize that his death caught you by surprise, but what you published was rather scanty—as you know, Peter Cushing was one of the last great horror stars, and to let his passing go with such brief attention is really a letdown. It's the sort of disre-

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spect I would expect from the likes of *Starlog* and *Fangoria* (who, I am sad to say, lived down completely to my expectations), but which I would never in a million years foresee from your usually fine publication.

More than anything, it was the lack of an appropriate cover which irked me. The tiny banner on the bottom corner was an insult, frankly; at least put the man's name in a prominent place, for crying out loud! Looking at this cover, it is cruelly ironic to note the coverage devoted to *INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE*: a passable time-killer, sure, but nothing compared to the great Hammer films *HORROR OF DRACULA* and *BRIDES OF DRACULA*. Again I say I expected better from you.

I don't mean to be bitchy, but if you people can't offer a fitting retrospective for the great horror stars (and only Christopher Lee is left), then who will? It may be that by the time you get this letter, a more appropriate tribute will appear within your pages in a new issue; if this should be the case, I'll be glad to write back and let you know how much I appreciate the effort. If it should be that this is the sum total of your commemoration of "The Gentle Man of Hor-

ror" (not to mention one of the most important portrayers of Sherlock Holmes!), I will be extremely upset with you. I shall not make threats to abandon the magazine, for it is otherwise too good, and your efforts otherwise too obviously dedicated and heartfelt, to be dismissed so easily. But I, for one, will be a chagrined fanboy.

Jonathan Malcolm Lampey  
Murfreesboro, TN

Richard Valley replies: Peter Cushing died on Thursday, August 11, 1994, less than two weeks before the Fall Issue of Scarlet Street was scheduled to print. Nevertheless, we managed to contact many of the late actor's co-workers (calling everywhere from LA to Australia) and put together a tribute in the style of our previous one to Vincent Price, with comments from such genre luminaries as Barbara Shelley, Sir John Mills, Anthony Hinds, Ursula Andress, Michael Ripper, Hazel Court, Michael Gough, Doug McClure (who, sadly, told us of the lung cancer that would take his life last February), and Christopher Lee. This was no easy task, and I took pride in the fact that we managed to pull it off. Rather than run one of those "and then he starred in" retros, which rarely offer anything new to the reader, we chose to present some-

thing fresh and unique—and, I feel, succeeded in doing so. (Had we not done so, we would likely have heard from readers complaining that we hadn't done for Cushing what we'd done for Price.)

As for the cover, which is sent to press before the rest of the issue, it was simply too late to do anything but add the banner. In no way did this imply the slightest disrespect for Peter Cushing, who has been represented on our cover by name, by image, or by a photo of a film in which he starred, no less than five times.

Except for fanzines devoted exclusively to Hammer Films, I don't think any mag has filled more pages with Cushing coverage than Scarlet Street. Not only will Peter Cushing live in the hearts of his fans, he'll be back in our pages, time and again . . .

When I was a teenager, I saw a British film about a woman who ran a girls' reformatory. The woman had a 10-year-old son who was always peeping at the girls through holes in the shower-room wall.

Whenever his mother caught him staring at the girls, she would tell him, "No, no—you need someone like your mother."

One by one the girls turn up missing, because the son is mur-

dering them and taking bits and pieces to create his own woman—someone just like his mother.

What was the name of this film?  
George Galahad  
Bangor, ME

The 1970 Spanish film is THE HOUSE THAT SCREAMED, and you'll find all you need to know about it in Scarlet Streets #5 (interview with director Narciso Ibanez Serrador) and #7 and #8 (an interview with John Moulder-Brown, who was pushing 18 when he played the young cut-up). If you want 'em, check out the back issues on page 7.

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**BLAKE OF SCOTLAND YARD\*** (1937) Ralph Byrd, Herbert Rawlinson, John Barclay, Lloyd Hughes. A young inventor and a famed Scotland Yard detective fight against a cloaked madman with a claw hand known as "The Scorpion." At stake is control of death ray machine. From 16mm. \$185.

**THE FANTASTIC PUPPET PEOPLE\*** (1958) John Agar, June Kenney, John Hoyt. A man doll-maker has a shrinking machine that reduces people to a tenth of their size. He keeps his victims in small glass tubes, taking them out occasionally to ward off his loneliness. They eventually plot their escape. From 16mm. \$167.

**GORGIO** (1961) Bill Travers, William Sylvester. A bizarre monster movie about a baby dinosaur that's captured and put on exhibition in London. Its gigantic mother goes on a rampage and practically destroys the city looking for her baby. Great special effects. Beautiful color. From 35mm. \$188.

**DEATH RAY OF DR. MABUSE** (1964) Wolfgang Preiss, Peter Van Eyck, Yvonne Furneaux, Tokio Yari. This menace, Dr. Mabuse threatens the world with a death ray. This was the last of the six German Mabuse from the 60s. From 16mm. \$189.

**THE DOOMSDAY MACHINE** (1967) Grant Williams, Henry Whilcoxon, Dennis Miller, Max Powers. A spaceship streaks toward Venus. Its passengers are stunned to see the destruction of Earth on their telescreens. The Red Chinese have destroyed the planet with a nuclear doomsday device! Color from 16mm. \$190.

**FUTURE WOMAN** (1975) George Sanders, Shirley Eaton, Richard Wyler, directed by Jess Franco. A beautiful woman from "Femire" leads a well-trained (and very attractive) female army in a plot to take over the world. They use the oldest trap in the world as well: sex. Quite rare and very bizarre. A hoot. Color, from 16mm. \$191.

**THE CRATER LAKE MONSTER** (1977) Richard Cardella, Glenn Roberts, Kacey Cobb. A meteor splashes down in Crater Lake, awakening a dormant dinosaur in the process. Big fight between the monster and a snowplow. From 35mm. \$192.



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**STAR ODYSSEY** (1977) Sharon Baker, Chris Avran. An exciting sci-fi thriller about a horrible alien mastermind who's chosen the Earth for annihilation. The Earth sends a fleet of starships to fight against the super robots from this far-off galaxy. Color. 16mm. \$193.

**CRYPT OF HORROR** (1963) Christopher Lee, Ursula Davis, Jose Campos, Verne Troyer. A witch curses the family of Count Karnstein. The witch herself will someday be reincarnated as one of the Count's offspring. Years later, the Count fears his daughter is the one. A gripping Italian horror film. From 16mm. \$206.

**WHAT?** (1963) Christopher Lee, Tony Kendall, Celia Lovi, Hammer White, directed by Mario Bava. The setting is a 19th century castle. Lee plays a sadistic nobleman who whips the wife of his brother. Lee is later found dead, his ghost haunts the castle. A top-notch Italian horror thriller. This is the uncut American theatrical release version. From a technicolor 35mm print. \$207.

**BLACK TORMENT** (1964) Heather Sears, John Turner, Ann Lynn. A British nobleman is suspected of rape, murder, and witchcraft. He returns to his castle with a new bride. There, he is haunted by his mad twin brother and the ghost of his first wife. First time on video. From 16mm. \$208.

**SWEET SOUND OF DEATH** (1965) Ennio Capa, Olafkino Zukowski, Vicki Israel. A very effective b&w chiller about a man who has a premonition of his lover's death. He later finds out she has actually died in a plane crash. Her ghost then returns from the grave and lures him to the haunted castle of her ancestors. Similar to CASTLE OF BLOOD. First time on video. From 16mm. \$209.

**THE EMBALMER\*** (1966) Maureen Brown, Glyn Mart, Luciano Gasper, Anita Todesco. One of the most sought after Italian horror films. A horrible band pulls beautiful girls down into murky canals of Venice. He kills and "stuffs" them for his grisly collection of mock-classic human statues that adorn the walls of his underground lair. Rare and first time on video. Recommended. From 35mm. \$210.

**HATCHET FOR A HONEYMOON** (1969) Stephen Fortyt, Dagmar Alexander, Laura Bell, directed by Mario Bava. A handsome young groom turns out to have an impotency problem with his wife. He goes totally cuckoo and starts hacking up women in bridal gowns. Everytime he kills, he remembers a little more of his horrible past. Recommended. Color, from 16mm. \$211.

**SCREAM OF THE DEMON LOVER** (1971) Jeffrey Chase, Jennifer Harvey, Agostino Belli. A hideously scared murderer terrorizes a remote village while a beautiful woman and a 19th century batch work on an experiment to show that matter can never be destroyed. UnCut and rated "R". Color from 16mm. \$212.

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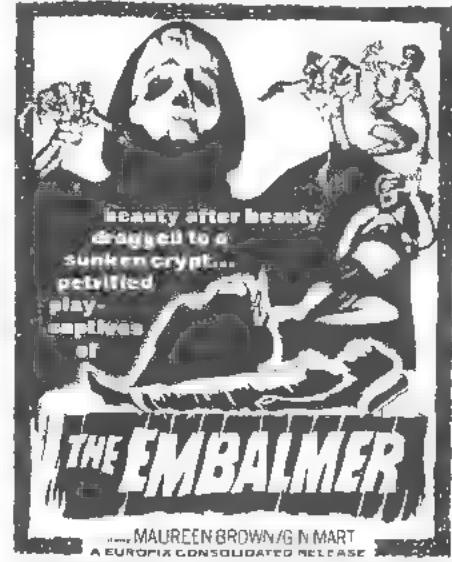
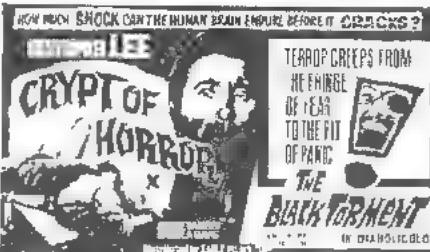
### HOOROR

**THE DEVIL'S HAND** (1942 aka CARNIVAL OF SINNERS) Pierre Fresnay, Josceline Gaet, Marcelle Monchy. A fine French fantasy/horror film about an artist who buys a hand which seems to bring him luck. The devil tells the artist to sell the hand for less than he paid for it within 24 hours, or be sent to Hell. From 16mm. \$202.

**HOUSE OF DARKNESS** (1948) Laurence Harvey, Leslie Brooks, John Stuart. Very similar in feel to DEAD OF NIGHT. A ghostly narrator presents flashbacks of a man who kills his step brother in a haunted house. The step brother's ghost returns to haunt his murderer. An ultra-horror, creepy British chiller. From 16mm. \$203.

**FACE OF TERROR** (1958) Jsa Gaye, Fernando Rey. A scientist develops a serum that can transform a scarred face into a thing of beauty again. Unknown to him, his subject turns out to be an escaped lunatic from an asylum. Great fun! From 35mm. \$204.

**THE ANATOMIST** (1961) Alastair Sim, George Cole, Michael Ripper, Jill Bennett. Another retelling of the dastardly exploits of the world's most famous body snatcher: Burke and Hare. This literate British version takes a more historical overview of the grisly events. From 16mm. \$205.



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**CHILDREN SHOULDNT PLAY WITH DEAD THINGS** (1973) Jeffrey Gillen, Paul Cronin, Roy Engleman. A director and his actor friends go to a remote island where—a bizarre joke—they dig up a corpse and conduct a strange ritual to raise it from the dead. It works! The corpse—along with the rest of the local dead—rise from their graves. Look out! A great comedy horror film. Rated "R". Color from 35mm. \$213.



# the NEWS HOUND



Photo © 1995 TriStar Pictures, Inc.

**S**ubmitted for your a-poodle: the latest news, dug up doggedly by your Hirsute Herald of thrilling things to come . . .

Open Channel D, Mr. Waverly . . . THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E. may soon return in a big screen spyfest, from acclaimed PULP FICTION writer/director Quentin Tarantino. John Davis (THE FIRM, PREDATOR) will likely produce the feature, based on the '60s NBC-TV series. No word on whether Robert Vaughan or David McCallum will participate.

Talk about split personalities! TriStar's Jekyll and Hyde drama MARY REILLY has gone back before the cameras at press time, reportedly because the producers couldn't decide on an ending. (Did they try reading the book?) Perhaps director Stephen Frears can appear on-screen, à la William Castle, and ask the audience to decide. The Julia Roberts/John Malkovich pic is still slated to hit the movie screens this summer. Joining it (hopefully) at the local hexaplex will be the likes of FIRST KNIGHT, the Arthurian fantasy starring Sean Connery and Richard Gere; cyberpunk thriller

JOHNNY MNEMONIC with speedy Keanu Reeves; the Michael Crichton monkey movie CONGO, with Dylan Walsh and Laura Linney (Mary Ann Singleton in TALES OF THE CITY); and the feature-film version of the MIGHTY MORPHIN POWER RANGERS, who have perhaps morphed to the level of their own incompetence.

Eagerly awaited is the fall release DEVIL IN A BLUE DRESS, starring Denzel Washington as Easy Rawlins, protagonist of detective novelist Walter Mosley's tales of 1940s L.A. Autumn also brings the high-tech thriller THE NET starring Sandra Bullock (SPEED), and maybe even the MYSTERY SCIENCE

THEATER 3000 movie, if Joel and the robots get cracking. Year end we'll be treated to SCREAMERS, a sci-fi thriller starring Peter "Buckaroo Banzai" Weller, based on a Phillip K. Dick story. Come November, here's looking at GOLDENEYE, the new 007 adventure which costars Judi Dench (as "M") and Robbie "Cracker" Coltrane, along with steely Pierce Brosnan as Bond,

COP team, headed by director Paul Verhoeven . . . Tom Hanks will find that life ain't a box of chocolates when he stars in STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND, Paramount's lensing of yet another Heinlein classic . . . Steven Spielberg's Amblin Productions may cause a DEEP IMPACT (at the box office, he hopes) with an outer-space encounter that's a little too close . . . Perhaps the most insidious alien invader of all will be TV comedian Garry Shandling, who plays a would-be space Casanova out to colonize Earth in his first starring feature from Columbia Pictures. Hey, now!

And more future science-fiction: 20th Century Fox will mount its unrecognizable, action-heavy reworking of PLANET OF THE APES, with Arnold Schwarzenegger as its probable star. First Chuck Heston, now Arnold; those Republicans love their chimps! . . . Jodie Foster plays an astronomer who makes CONTACT with alien intelligence, in a film version of Carl Sagan's novel. Now we know where she learned that NELL lingo . . . Producer Peter Guber (of BAT-

MAN fame) plans to make a new live-action FLASH GORDON flick for Sony Pictures . . . Snake Plissken returns (we thought he was dead!) in John Carpenter's ESCAPE FROM L.A., with Kurt Russell again doing his Clint impression . . . Stan Winston's FORBIDDEN PLANET remake is finally before the cameras, but TriStar's GODZILLA has been pushed back (gently, now . . . he's touchy) to a summer start, having lost Jan De Bont as director. De Bont (SPEED) will instead helm the Steven Spielberg/Michael Crichton production TWISTER, based on the popular party game. No, wait—it's

Photo Courtesy



MARY REILLY, the latest "it's not really a horror movie" movie, stars John Malkovich and Julia Roberts in a reworking of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

James Bond. (Desmond Llewelyn is back as gadget-master "Q.")

Watch the skies! An invasion of major proportions is hurtling our way from Hollywood: Tim Burton will turn the gory story on the backs of the '60s Topps trading cards "Mars Attacks!" into a movie . . . Another attack is due on INDEPENDENCE DAY, when aliens bring doom to us Yankee Doodle Dandies on a futuristic July 4th, this through the courtesy of the makers of the smash STARGATE . . . It'll be sink or swarm when big interplanetary bugs invade in TriStar's STARSHIP TROOPERS, based on the Robert Heinlein novel. It's from the original ROBO-

Continued on page 18

The nights when THE X-FILES was one of television's best-kept secrets are over. In a surprise almost as startling as the first time Eugene Tooms popped out of an air vent, the Fox series recently copped a Golden Globe Award as TV's best dramatic series, winning out over PICKET FENCES, NYPD BLUE, CHICAGO HOPE and ER. Series creator Chris Carter seems more than a little stunned by the unexpected turn of events. Happy, but stunned.

"It feels as if we are not just a critical success, a media success, but that we have established ourselves as a quality show," Carter told *Scarlet Street*. "We have been, I guess, sanctified. It boosts crew morale. It makes us feel as if we're not working in a vacuum. The show's produced in Vancouver and sometimes we feel a little far flung. This is very nice to know—that there are people paying attention."

Actually, more people are paying attention all the time. The show has also been nominated for a coveted Edgar Award, presented annually by the Mystery Writers of America.

Then there's the new Topps X-Files comic, which captures perfectly the paranoid quality of the TV show. The first issue, featuring a Stefan Petrucha story concerning an extraterrestrial explanation for Earthly miracles, was an instant hit. (The standard run of 100,000 copies sold out almost immediately, and the order for the second issue was doubled.)

Editor-in-chief Jim Salicrup has a few spooky treats in store for comic-book fans. One in particular was first suggested in last fall's spectacular X-FILES/NIGHT STALKER issue of *Scarlet Street*—namely, that reporter Carl Kolchak put in a guest shot opposite FBI agents Fox Mulder and Dana Scully.

"We have the comic-book rights to KOLCHAK: THE NIGHT STALKER," said Salicrup in a recent interview. "The best way to introduce Kolchak to today's audiences is probably for a crossover in *The X-Files*, and then launch Kolchak in his own book."

## INSIDE THE X-FILES



TM

Chris Carter, who freely admits that THE X-FILES was inspired by his love for THE NIGHT STALKER, has also been trying to arrange a meeting. "Yes, we've hoped that as well, and we've gone after Darren McGavin quite aggressively, twice, to be on the show. And he's resisted each time. Not in a conscious way—I think he's just been unavailable."

Though McGavin stated categorically in *Scarlet Street* #16 that he would not play Kolchak again because he did not want to work with NIGHT STALKER producer/director Dan Curtis, there is always the chance that he might reprise the character for someone else. Certainly, it's something that McGavin's legion of fans would love to see happen.

Concerning another much-longed-for return—that of X-FILES mutant Eugene Victor Tooms, last seen nude, slimy, and flat as a flapjack thanks to a fatal encounter with an escalator—Chris Carter doesn't hold out much hope. ("Remember, he did meet—well—an untimely end.")

Still, we're talking X-FILES here, and who knows but that Eugene will live to eat liver again. Stranger things have happened....

—Richard Valley



# Music Hath (Evil) Charms . . .



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Melodic news for Hammer fans! Silva Screen's long-delayed sequel to their 1991 recording *MUSIC FROM THE HAMMER FILMS* (covered in the very first issue of *Scarlet Street*) is in the works!

There's no scheduled release date, but the new recording, titled *QUATERMASS: MUSIC FOR THE HAMMER FILMS*, features a James Bernard program of suites and themes from *SHE*, *KISS OF THE VAMPIRE*, *HORROR OF DRACULA* (what, again?), *FRANKENSTEIN CREATED WOMAN*, *X-THE UNKNOWN*, *THE CREEPING UNKNOWN*, and *ENEMY FROM SPACE*.

Bernard will also be found on Silva Screen's *THE GREATEST MOVIE MONSTER ALBUM IN THE WORLD*, as will Gerard Schurmann, Benjamin Frankel, Carlo Martelli, Buxton Orr, Humphrey Searle, and Paul Ferris. The films: *THE DEVIL'S BRIDE*, *HORRORS OF THE BLACK MUSEUM*, *CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF*, *FIEND WITHOUT A FACE*, *KONGA*, *THE CONQUEROR WORM*, *CURSE OF THE MUMMY'S TOMB*, *DR. BLOOD'S COFFIN*, and *THE HAUNTING*. (Sadly, Silva Screen has not seen fit to record Malcolm Williamson's classic score from *THE BRIDES OF DRACULA*.)

Both fright-filled recordings feature the Westminster Philharmonic under the direction of Kenneth Alwyn.

—Drew Sullivan

## NEWS HOUND

*Continued from page 16*

actually a thriller about tornadoes, featuring lots of FX! And a colorful spinning dial! Maybe . . .

Not since those Mexican wrestling pictures has there been a Battle of the Mummies like this: Anne Rice's novel *THE MUMMY* is currently in development for future filming by action specialists Carolco. Universal might be the first in the ring, however, with an update of the Karloff original. Mick Garris (*THE STAND*) is set to direct this one, from a screenplay credited to Garris, John Sayles, and George Romero. Watch for *THE MUMMY* soundtrack album, doubtless featuring popular wrap artists.

The cameras are currently grinding on the horror sequels *WOLF-MAN II* (from North Carolina B-movie maven Earl Owensby), the Canadian flicker *WITCHBOARD III*, and *WITCHCRAFT VII: A TASTE FOR BLOOD*. (The ol' Hound must have been hibernating during the releases of *WITCHCRAFT*s one

through six.) Also currently rolling is *UNFORGETTABLE*, a thriller from director John Dahl (*THE LAST SEDUCTION*). Ray Liotta stars as a doctor who's out to find his wife's killer with the help of an experimental drug that lets him experience other people's memories . . . and old Nat King Cole records.

The medical thrillers of M. D. scribe Michael Palmer are headed for the screen. First up: *EXTREME MEASURES*, with a screenplay by Tony Gilroy (*DOLORES CLAI-BORNE*) and a possible lead performance by dashing Hugh Grant. Next may be *NATURAL CAUSES*, which Gregory Hines may star in and may produce. (May Day! May Day!) Other upcoming literary adaptations include Elmore Leonard's *GET SHORTY* starring John Travolta, Stephen King's *THE MIST* from writer/director Frank Darabont (*THE SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION*), and Alexander Basher's virtual-reality detective story *RIM*, which Robin Williams will produce for TriStar. Jack Finney's timeless

classic *Time and Again* will finally be filmed, bolstered by the success of his best-selling sequel, *From Time to Time*. Robert Redford will produce the screen version of Finney's original novel for Universal. And John Le Carre's *The Night Manager* will become a Sydney Pollack film, to be released by Paramount.

Even more intriguing stuff in the works: A scientist tries to reprogram a convicted killer's mind with nice, calm thoughts in *SECOND NATURE*, from Castle Rock/Columbia. E. Max Frye (*SOMETHING WILD*) wrote the screenplay, so expect complications... Mel Brooks is back in his "Young Fronk-en-steen" mood with *DRACULA IS DEAD—AND LIKING IT . . .* Bountiful Pamela Anderson of *BAYWATCH* stars as Dark Horse Comics character *BARB WIRE* in a Universal release, produced by *DIE HARD*'s Lawrence Gordon . . . Saucy Jack rips again in two planned pix: *FROM HELL*, adapted from Alan Moore's graphic novels, and *THE DIARY OF JACK THE RIPPER*,

which William Friedkin will tackle for New Line Cinema . . . Director Oliver Stone and screenwriter Joe Eszterhas team up for the Warner Bros. feature *WILD HORSES*. It's a true-life murder mystery based on the 1977 disappearance of a Chicago heiress. Stone, of course, also has another fact-based fright flick in the works: *NIXON* . . . Soggy Kevin Costner may slog out of *WATERWORLD* and into arid Morocco, to play expatriate saloon owner Rick Blaine in a remake of (you guessed it) *CASABLANCA*. Demi Moore may costar as the alluring Ilsa Lund. Early rumors indicate an eventual sale to Turner's TNT cable channel, where it will be changed to black-and-white, and then colorized "just for practice."

Since the zillion-dollar performance of Disney's *THE LION KING* and its predecessors, animation mania has hit just about every Hollywood studio. Eight animated feature films are scheduled for release this year, and many more are in the works. Some of the more intriguing projects include *BALTO*, a fact-based Alaskan canine adventure from Amblin/Universal; *THE FROG PRINCE*, a Brothers Grimm adaptation by Claymation king Will Vinton; and *TOY STORY*, the first all-computer-animated pic, produced by Pixar. Roald Dahl's *JAMES AND THE GIANT PEACH*, from stop-motion wizard Henry Selick (*THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS*), will be released next year. Also arriving in '96: Hemdale's G-rated musical *THE MIGHTY KONG*, featuring a "kinder, gentler" 10-story-tall ape; Disney's *HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME*, with the voices of Kevin Kline, Demi Moore, and Tom Hulce; and Paramount's *THE THIEF OF ALWAYS*, based on Clive Barker's best-selling modern fairy tale.

Great news for fans of *Scarlet Street* fave George (*CIRCUS OF HORRORS*) Baxt: Vanguard Films has optioned Baxt's Pharaoh Love mystery, *A Queer Kind of Love*, for development as a feature film. According to Vanguard executive producer Charles Hobson, "Pharaoh Love is a shrewd and streetwise New York detective. He is also black, gay, and proud of both attributes. I loved the book. Every chapter just screamed 'Screenplay, screenplay' at me." (That was no chapter; that was George Baxt.)

The trick, of course, will come in finding a black actor who (unlike Denzel Washington, Will Smith, and Eddie Murphy) isn't too homophobic to play the part.

Turning from the big, big screen to—no, not the small—envelopes, word comes that the families of Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi, and Lon Chaney Jr. have petitioned the United States Post Office for a stamp set entitled "The Legends of Horror." The Hound hereby urges all you pups to send a note of support to Sara Karloff, P. O. Box 2424, Rancho Mirage, CA 92270. Remember, kids, by putting Lon, Boris, and Bela on stamps, you too may be able to lick the world's greatest monsters!

Now, on to the tiny tube: A computer search is on for the next



Speedy Keanu Reeves listens to a "how to do foreign accents" tape in a shocking scene from *JOHNNY MNEMONIC*.

Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew. New Line Television and Nelvana Ltd. conducted an on-line casting call a few months ago to find the talent for their two new TV series, debuting this fall. Techno-minded thespians were asked to upload their résumés and digitized 8x10 glossies into the computer lines, in a first-ever "cyber-casting call." Beware, aspiring stars! The virtual casting couch may be next!

In other television news . . . Helen Mirren returns as DCI Jane Tennison in *PRIME SUSPECT 4*, to be seen on WGBH's *MYSTERY!* series this fall (provided the Newt from Hell hasn't wiped PBS off the air by then). Actually, it'll be *PRIME SUSPECT 4, 5, and 6*, since three separate two-hour telefilms have been produced. One of the stories features the reappearance of the guy Tennison locked up in the first installment . . . *IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE*, a made-for-cable feature, will be telecast on The Sci-Fi Channel in October . . . *THE*

*TOMORROW MAN* is a new CBS series in the works about an android sent back in time to discover why all humans disappeared from Earth . . . New sci-fi shows from the Fox network include the interplanetary shoot-em-up *SPACE*, Francis Coppola's *WHITE DWARF*, and producer Chris Carter's spin-off of his Golden Globe award-winning series *THE X-FILES*.

On the home video front, I'd be one homeless Hound if I didn't mention that most of the following shows and movies are available from Scarlet Street Video.

*BROTHER CADFAEL*, the medieval mystery series starring Sir Derek Jacobi, is now available . . . Look for new feature releases *STAR-GATE* (from Live Home Video), *ED WOOD* (Disney), *TIMECOP* (MCA), and *WES CRAVEN'S NEW NIGHTMARE* (Turner). Columbia Home Video has released some of stop-motion monarch Ray Harryhausen's best films to video for \$19.98 each, including the premiere release of *20 MILLION MILES TO EARTH*. A boxed set of the three Sinbad movies is also available for \$34.98. William Shatner's first *TEKWAR* telefeature is available from MCA, and the Stephen King miniseries *THE STAND* is newly priced at \$39.98. Another King-size bargain is busting out in June, when *THE TOMMY-KNOCKERS* is reissued by

Vidmark at \$19.98.

"He's one vampire you don't want to interview!" claims the press release for the independent horror feature *NIGHT OWL*, starring John Leguizamo, and featuring Holly Woodlawn and Caroline Munro.

A quartet of Hammer horrors will haunt the laserdisc racks in August: *NIGHTMARE*, *PARANOIC*, *PHANTOM OF THE OPERA*, and *KISS OF THE VAMPIRE*. Currently available on disc is an MCA double feature of the classics *MURDER IN THE RUE MORGUE* and *ISLAND OF LOST SOULS*.

The Hound pays a final tribute to the incredibly prolific Donald Pleasence, villain extraordinaire, as well as to David Wayne (with whom *Scarlet Street* spoke about *ELLERY QUEEN* and *PORTRAIT OF JENNIE* shortly before his death), Woody Strode, Kay Aldridge, Peter Cook, Nancy Kelly, and Doug McClure.





## Horrors! Hammer's Music Man is Back!

He's back, and Count Dracula's got him!

He is Hammer Films composer James Bernard, and Dracula, in this case, is not the red-eyed, black-caped figure of Christopher Lee, but *NOSFERATU*, the original, unauthorized 1921 German film version of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*—subtitled, appropriately, *A SYMPHONY OF TERROR*.



James Bernard is known to horror fans the world over as the composer of the music for such films as *THE CREEPING UNKNOWN* (1956), *THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1957), *Horror of DRACULA* (1958), *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES* (1959), *SHE* (1965), *FRANKENSTEIN CREATED WOMAN* (1967), *THE DEVIL'S BRIDE* (1968), and *TASTE THE BLOOD OF DRACULA* (1970). Bernard hasn't written a full background score in more than 10 years. His last, for *Tyburn*, was for a film no one has seen called *MURDER ELITE*.

*NOSFERATU* is the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau film that Bram Stoker's widow, Florence, tried to have wiped off the face of the Earth. She won her case, and it was ordered that all copies of the film be destroyed—but vampires aren't that easy to wipe out.

Recently, Tanis Film of Houston, Texas, acquired the worldwide rights to *NOSFERATU*. The Munich Film Museum has restored an original, tinted 35mm print. Tanis' David Lowe now had to come up with a way to score the silent film.

"Initially, we contacted Silva Screen to gain the rights to use some of the music from previous Hammer films," recalls Lowe. "The films we had in mind were *Horror of DRACULA* and *DRACULA—PRINCE OF DARKNESS*. Silva had released an album of Bernard scores, although they were conducted by someone else. The orchestra was the London Philharmonic. But we decided we weren't going to go that route, because the expense with paying ASCAP was immense. So we decided that the less expensive way was to have a new score composed."

"It would have been much too expensive," agrees Silva Screen's David Stoner, "and wouldn't it have been odd to have music from these other films in *NOSFERATU*? We suggested that, if they liked the Hammer scores so much, perhaps they'd like to see if the original composer would be interested in the project. Then, if they got a new score, they'd not only have the video release, but the soundtrack release as well on CD. Everyone thought this was the way to go."

The question remained: Would James Bernard think this was the way to go?

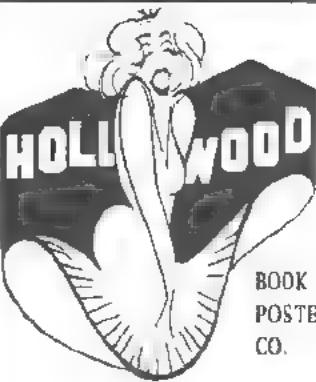
"We pretty much dragged him out of retirement," laughs Stoner. "He was happy, just sitting there in Jamaica and what not. But now he's got the bit between his teeth again, and he's having a grand old time."

Bernard plans to finish the new score this spring and then go into the recording studio by late summer. Then *NOSFERATU* will have a limited theatrical release before going to tape and disc.

"Our plans mainly involve releasing the film theatrically in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and Los Angeles," says Lowe. "More than likely we'll also play London, Paris, and Berlin. We haven't agreed on any video or laserdisc distribution yet. There are a number of companies out there that already have versions of the film on tape—but they don't have the James Bernard score."

Music, maestro, please and make it grand enough to wake the dead!

—Danny Savello



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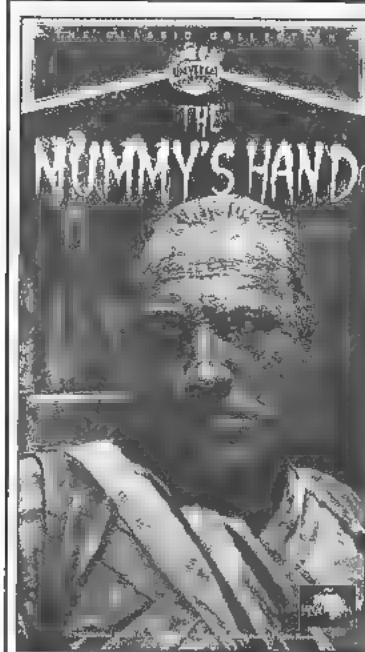
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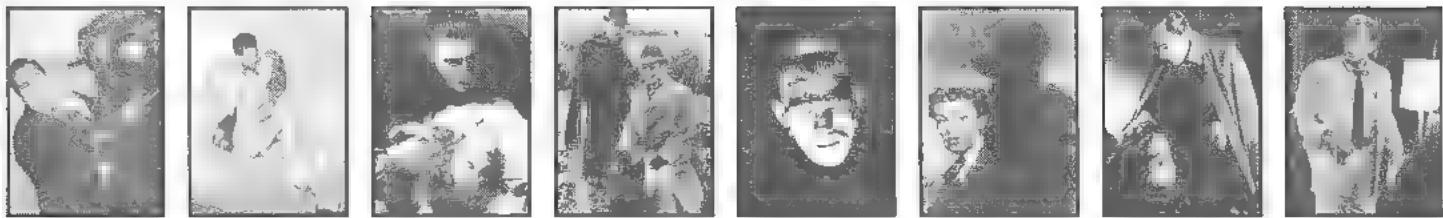
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# SCREEN...

## and Screen Again!

The Latest on Laser By Sean Farrell

### ED WOOD COLLECTION

Lumivision LVD9418

Four sides; CLV

\$79.95

Edward D. Wood, Jr. has enjoyed a bizarre resurgence in popularity that crested recently with Tim Burton's film bio of the late Z-movie director. A further result of all this wild Wood work is the release of three of his films on laser disc. Lumivision has collected JAIL BAIT (1955), PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE (1959), and NIGHT OF THE GHOULS (1959) in a boxed set called THE ED WOOD COLLECTION, presented on two discs in the CLV mode. The trailers for PLAN 9 and JAIL BAIT are included after each respective film. Bruce Eder provides extensive liner notes, as well as the witty chapter titles.

So much has been written about PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE, Wood's best-known film, that the only thing I can add is: You've gotta see it to believe it! The dialogue alone makes this a "so bad, it's good" classic. A fine example is a scene between the evil aliens Eros (Dudley Manlove) and Tanna (Joanna Lee), in which they discuss their human opponents. "What do you think will be the next obstacle the Earth people will put in our way?" Tanna asks. Eros, looking grim, replies, "Well, as long

as they can think, we'll have our problems . . ." (If this was the case, aliens would have taken over Earth a long time ago.)

The PLAN 9 trailer plays up the presence of Bela Lugosi, as if he was the star of the film. In fact, Lugosi passed away well before shooting began. Wood used some footage that he had shot of the horror star wandering around in his Dracula cape, then inserted scenes with a double who looked nothing like Bela Lugosi.

Lugosi's double was Dr. Thomas R. Mason, a chiropractor who also appeared as the revived dead husband in Wood's next production, NIGHT OF THE GHOULS. This film, supposedly a sequel to PLAN 9 but actually a followup to Wood's BRIDE OF THE MONSTER (1955), concerns people trying to contact the afterlife. The highlight here is a seance, complete with squeaky ghost in a white sheet, a floating trumpet, and a helmeted "spirit guide" babbling to the beatnik accompaniment of bongo drums. I'm not making this stuff up.

JAIL BAIT, the last film in this set, was actually shot by Wood before PLAN 9 and NIGHT OF THE GHOULS. The first thing one notices about this early effort is the weird, jarring guitar and piano music. Wood reportedly wanted a zither score for his picture, but

could not find a zither player, so he lifted the background score from MESA OF LOST WOMEN (1952).

Lumivision's JAIL BAIT laserdisc claims to be the "director's cut," doubtless because they restored a risqué (for the 1950s) dance number. This scene really has nothing to do with the plot, but such details never stopped our boy Eddie before. For those who need to know, JAIL BAIT is basically a good-kid-gone-bad story, dealing with—as the trailer proclaims—"boy crazy girls and gun crazy guys."

The print quality for each movie is very good, with just a few minor scratches here and there. The sound is clear, with the exception of NIGHT OF THE GHOULS, which is really the fault of the filmmakers, not Lumivision. All in all, this laser collection is a must for fans of ED WOOD and bad movies. But remember: Future laserdiscs like this could affect you in the future!

**DRACULA'S DAUGHTER & THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN**  
MCA/Universal Home Video 42152  
Side 1, 3: CLV; Side 2, 4: CAV  
\$59.95

If these two horror films seem like an odd choice for a double feature, consider this: Not only are they both sequels, but both DRACULA'S DAUGHTER and THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN are about family and the heavy burden of a terrible legacy.

DRACULA'S DAUGHTER, made in 1936, is a direct sequel to Universal's classic 1931 DRACULA. It picks up right after the climax of the original film, as two London bobbies warily enter what was once Dracula's lair and discover



the body of Renfield. Professor Van (now "Von," for no discernible reason) Helsing (again played by Edward Van Sloan) directs the police to the staked corpse of Dracula himself, and confesses that he was the immortal Count's killer.

Later, Dracula's body is stolen from the local constabulary by the sultry Countess Marya Zaleska—Dracula's daughter herself (well played by Gloria Holden).

Meanwhile, back in London, Dr. Von Helsing has been arrested for Dracula's murder. Geoffrey Garth (Otto Kruger), a prominent London psychiatrist and a former student of Von Helsing's, quickly gets to work clearing his mentor's name. But Garth becomes side-tracked when the troubled Countess Zaleska seeks him out for professional

pit prison which goes to show that, if only these pesky villagers would leave well enough alone, everything would be okay.

Recharged by a timely bolt of lightning, the Monster and Ygor set out to find Ludwig, the second son of Frankenstein, in the hope of increasing the Monster's powers.

Bela Lugosi—who was entirely absent from DRACULA'S DAUGHTER—here plays Ygor with hammy panache, all but stealing the pic from his costars. Lon Chaney, Jr. is a subdued, but effective, Monster.

Both DRACULA'S DAUGHTER and THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN look like a million bucks on laser. Despite some minor scratches, the prints have a clear, crisp image and excellent sound. But MCA Universal doesn't stop there. Following each movie on the CAV side are theatrical trailers and a generous supply of production stills that the viewer can examine one frame at a time. Add extensive liner notes to the handsome package, and it's obvious that this Encore Edition of DRACULA'S DAUGHTER and THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN is a required addition to the collection of fright fanatics.

#### THE PRIVATE LIFE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES Image ID7413MG Side 1, 2, and 4 CLV; Side 3 CAV \$59.95

Here's a Sherlockian treat that was well worth waiting for!

Scarlet Street first broke the news about this release in Issue #15, and for a good reason: It's a wonderful edition of a sadly-neglected Billy Wilder masterpiece. The director of such classics as DOUBLE INDEMNITY (1944), SUNSET BLVD (1950), SOME LIKE IT HOT (1959), THE APARTMENT (1960), and IRMA LA DOUCE (1963), Billy Wilder had been fascinated by the Great Detective since he was a boy. With THE PRIVATE LIFE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES (1970), Wilder crafted an affectionate tribute that explored Holmes' personal side, uncovering what made the man under the Inverness tick.

Image has done a marvelous job with PRIVATE LIFE. This is the first time I've ever seen this movie in its original widescreen format, and it's like watching a completely



new film—one that is infinitely better than the old pan-and-scan version that exists on videotape.

Letterboxing alone would be reason enough to recommend this disc, but that's only the beginning of the goodies in store. Image has also added a special supplementary section containing rare, behind-the-scenes photos; the complete script by Wilder and I. A. L. Diamond; pages from the original press book, and composer Miklos Rozsa's cue sheets. Rozsa's wonderful score (never released as a soundtrack album) can also be isolated on the right digital and analog tracks.

And there's more: The Adventure of the Missing Footage has been (partially) solved! Two scenes that had been deleted prior to the film's original release are included in the supplementary section. Unfortunately, the soundtrack of one scene, "The Dreadful Business of the Naked Honeymooners," has been lost, so the sequence is presented with subtitles. It is still decidedly funny watching Watson show Holmes that he, too, can crack a case. (Colin Blakely's facial expressions alone are enough to provoke laughter in this scene.)

Ironically, the footage, not the sound, of the other deleted scene ("The Curious Case of the Upside Down Room," the only major sequence in the film to feature the character of Inspector Lestrade) is also lost. The folks at Image have isolated the complete soundtrack of this scene on the right digital and analog tracks of an interview they conducted with film editor Ernest Walter. There is much on this disc to keep the average viewer happily entertained for hours, and no true Holmes fan should be caught without it.



services. Oddly, she prefers only evening appointments....

There are horror-film fans who prefer DRACULA'S DAUGHTER to DRACULA. Count this critic among their number.

THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN (the most underrated of Universal's Frankie films) is just as enjoyable. Though the Frankenstein Monster is considered dead and buried, the ever-frantic villagers aren't satisfied; they decide to destroy the abandoned castle for good measure. Ygor, still pining for the good old horror-filled days, fights them off as best he can, but he is ultimately overcome by superior numbers. The castle gets blown up, all right, but the explosions free the Monster from his sulphur-

# Peter Cushing Remembered

by Tony Earnshaw

When Peter Cushing died last August, it seemed that the entire world shed a collective tear. British journalists wrote respectfully of the man who was known by all as "the perfect gentleman." Friends, fans, and fellow actors were united in their grief, but smiled in the knowledge that Cushing had escaped the pain of cancer to rejoin his wife Helen after a long, and often lonely, 23-year separation.

In Whitstable on the day of his funeral, hundreds lined the streets as the cortege, led by funeral director Terry Davis in top hat, frock coat, and carrying Cushing's favorite walking stick, wound its way through the streets of the seaside town which had been the actor's home for 37 years.

With dozens of others following on foot, the hearse carrying Cushing's coffin stopped at some of his favorite haunts: the Tudor Tea Rooms, where Cushing would lunch and enjoy a quiet crossword; Cushing's View, renamed after Cushing donated a wooden seat for young lovers to sit and enjoy the spot where he and Helen had so often walked; and the Pirie and Cavender book shop, which was selling his book *The Bois Saga*, a phonetic history of Britain illustrated with Cushing's drawings.

Cushing's final journey was to Barham Crematorium, where friends gathered for a private service. His ashes were placed next to his wife's in the cemetery of the Norman church at nearby Seasalter.

Four months later, a notice appeared in both *The Stage* and *Screen International*. It read simply: "A memorial service for Peter Cushing, OBE, will be held at St. Paul's Church, Bedford Street, Covent Garden, London WC2, on Thursday, 12th January, 1995 at 11:30AM. The attendance of all Peter's friends, colleagues, and admirers is welcomed."

So it was on a crisp, sunny winter's day that I found myself strolling through Covent Garden towards St. Paul's Church—the actors' church—and my chance to say a final farewell to the man through whose work I discovered the magic of movies.

I was one of the first to arrive at St. Paul's, but the film crews and press photographers were already en-



camped by the semicircle of steps which led up to the door. As I entered I gave my name and was handed a plain white booklet listing the order of service.

"Do you have an invitation?" I was asked. "No, I'm just a fan," I replied. The egotist within me wanted to say "No, but I am Mr. Cushing's biographer." I resisted the urge, and seconds later a dignified usher quietly showed me to my seat in an area toward the rear of the church reserved for fans and others who, like me, had not received an official invitation.

As I awaited the start of the service, I made a note of those who followed me in. It was a five-star cast.

First came Dave Prowse, the monster from hell who later became Darth Vader. Ron Moody, the zoo-keeper in *LEGEND OF THE WEREWOLF*, followed. Next came Patrick Allen and his wife Sarah Lawson, who starred with Cushing in *NIGHT OF THE BIG HEAT*.

An unmistakable figure arrived next, elegantly dressed in a beige trench coat, his grey hair immaculately swept back in familiar style. Seconds later, after greeting Joyce and Bernard Broughton, Christopher Lee, accompanied by his wife Gitte, strode quietly up the aisle.

Many other celebrities and film folk followed. They included Don Henderson, Ingrid Pitt, Hammer chief Roy Skeggs, David Rintoul, Richard Briers, Donald Sinden, Paul Eddington, Joanna Lumley, and Michael Redington, the latter one of the few surviving members of Laurence Olivier's Old Vic tour of Australia.

Coordinating the affair was the chubby figure of Kevin Francis, head of Tyburn films, producer of three of Cushing's films, and one of his closest friends.

Shortly before 11:30, the sound of organ music filled the church as the final members of the 150-strong congregation took their seats. Then the Rever-

Tony Earnshaw's work has appeared in more than 20 British magazines, including *Hammer Horror*, *Film Review*, and *Starburst*. He is currently writing the authorized biography of Peter Cushing.

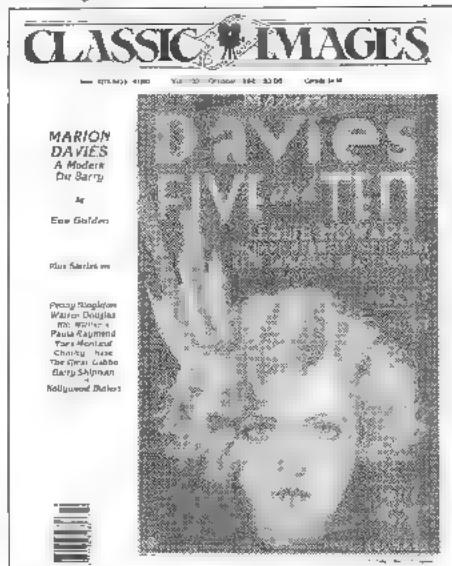
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LEFT: Ingrid Pitt (Peter Cushing's costar in 1971's *THE VAMPIRE LOVERS*) leaves St. Paul's Church. RIGHT: Ron Moody appeared with Cushing in *LEGEND OF THE WEREWOLF* (1975).

end Canon Bill Hall, senior chaplain of the Actors Church Union, began the service.

He spoke of Cushing's long career, spanning half a century, in film, theater, TV, and radio, of the many friends he had made during those years, and of the fans who loved him for his great creative talents.

"We celebrate the precious gifts of one who has been described by fellow actors as 'a wonderful friend' and 'a quite superb actor.' These gifts have enhanced the lives of so many, of whom we here today are but a small part.

"Many, like those of you here today, knew him well, and could also appreciate his private qualities. Many more of us, without knowing him personally, also admired him and derived great pleasure from his creative talents.

"We give thanks for his creative talents and wisdom, for his humor and charm, for his sensitivity and

warmth, for his gentleness and his generosity of spirit, for his faith and his courage.

"Most of all, we thank God for the joy he found in the love of his friends and, most especially, in the love of his dear wife. We are conscious of his words: 'I know, in my heart, I will see her again.'"

The congregation, accompanied by a choir, then sang a traditional rendering of the 23rd Psalm, "The Lord Is My Shepherd," followed by the first lesson, King David's 103rd Psalm, read by Ron Moody.

The choir then performed Gabriel Faure's "Cantique de Jean Racine," before Christopher Lee read the second lesson, from chapter three of the Gospel of St. John.

The passage was a long one, but one line stands out in my memory: "Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil." As Lee spoke, a shaft of bril-

LEFT: Kevin Francis and Gillian Garrow of Tyburn Films (for whom Cushing last played Sherlock Holmes, in 1984's *THE MASKS OF DEATH*) depart after the service. RIGHT: Roy Skeggs of Hammer Films.



lant winter sunlight illuminated the church. I am no churchgoer, but at that instant I believe Peter Cushing was there with us all.

After Lee's lesson, the congregation sang "All Things Bright and Beautiful," Cushing's favorite hymn, and a testament to his love of nature in all its forms.

It was an uplifting moment, and paved the way for a eulogy delivered by Cushing's old friend James Bree, entitled "The Early Years."

Bree recalled his first meeting with Cushing in 1953, and how their friendship blossomed. Cushing offered encouragement to Bree, then a nervous newcomer to TV, and Bree spent "many happy evenings" at the Cushing's London home during the years that followed.

Bree also recalled the medium which made Cushing a nationwide star name: live TV.

"In the '50s, television drama consisted of televised plays. Peter played many leading roles, and as such was not only the first true British star, but also the first popular actor.

"One of the first adaptations especially for TV was 1984—the most memorable, the most controversial, and the most discussed. It is still talked about to this day. Perhaps it was Peter's greatest TV performance.

"All these shows went out live. Only those of us unfortunate enough to experience this know its terrible demands, especially on the nerves. Peter went through this more than most, and in many long, arduous leading roles."

After Helen Cushing's death in 1971, Bree saw his old friend only once more, at a surprise 80th birthday party, organized by his loyal secretary, Joyce Broughton, on May 26, 1993.

"It was Joyce and [her husband] Bernard who almost forced Peter to have any sort of life for the last 23 years.

"They had already moved to be near him. His room was established in their house, and was there for whenever it was needed. There he was surrounded by family, and he had only to come out as far as he could manage.

"After Helen's death, it was difficult to accept that he no longer wanted to see his friends. We were forced to learn that we had to stay away, and not even try to offer consolation. His charm, his gentleness, and his friendliness were kept from us.

"Joyce said she thinks he sought a form of self-chastisement. We all know that after the loss of a loved one comes the agony of things that are usually greatly exaggerated, or merely imagined. Perhaps Peter felt this more than the rest of us.

"Peter is now at peace. He is free of physical pain, and mental anguish. In death, he is reunited with his beloved Helen."

Bree's eulogy was followed by the soprano Rosie Ashe, accompanied by pianist Jonathan Cohen, who sang "If Love Were All" from Noel Coward's musical BITTER SWEET.

Miss Ashe said: "I met Peter in 1988 when I was performing in a revival of BITTER SWEET. Peter had been to the show in London and wrote me a fan letter, which was so thrilling. Then I met him in person when he came to see the show on tour. This song is from that show, and he absolutely loved it."

Coward was followed by the laughter of Kevin Francis, as he delivered the second eulogy, entitled "The Later Years."

He remembered his good friend's childlike qualities, his love of cinematic excitement and adventure, and his engaging innocence, which astounded those around him.

At dinner during the making of THE MASKS OF DEATH in 1984, Cushing announced that he would not be insured while working on the film. A surprised Francis asked why.

"It's very kind of you, but if I die all that money will go to waste," said Cushing.

The church rang with laughter as Francis gave his explanation: "I told him the money would be used to make the film with someone else. Ninety-seven films and he had never quite grasped the meaning of insurance!"

Other stories spoke volumes of Cushing's modesty. At a meeting with the French actor [Jean Rochefort] who dubbed his films into French, each man was so impressed with the other's talent that the meeting degenerated into an exchange of mutual compliments.

"The French actor thought Peter Cushing was God, and Peter thought the French actor was God for getting the voice out of the mouth so well. This went on for hours."

Francis recalled another example of Cushing's innate natural modesty.

"Peter, a friend, and I were having lunch at the Houses of Parliament with Lord Tonypandy, one of our leading parliamentarians of the day. The two of them sat there. Viscount Tonypandy thought he was in the presence of royalty, and Peter thought he was in the presence of royalty.

"They also both loved rugby. Halfway through the meal, my friend said 'I think we're both surplus to requirements. Let's leave them to it!'"

His wife's death had left Cushing with no fear of his own passing, said Francis, who often discussed the subject with him.

"He was quite genuinely modest. I discussed whether he would actually appreciate a memorial service being held, and he said 'Do you think anyone would come?'"



Christopher Lee signs a few autographs after bidding a last farewell to his friend and frequent costar, Peter Cushing.

*Francis:* Of course. You know these theatrical types—if you're giving it away they'll all turn up!

*Cushing:* Will you say something?

*Francis:* Why not?

*Cushing:* Would you also say something at the funeral?

*Francis:* Yes.

*Cushing:* What would be different?

*Francis:* Nothing. I'll say the same thing.

*Cushing:* On what basis?

*Francis:* On the basis of if it goes down well in the provinces we'll bring it into the West End!

Francis ended his eulogy with a salute to Joyce and Bernard Broughton, pointedly praising their dedication to, and love of, Peter Cushing.

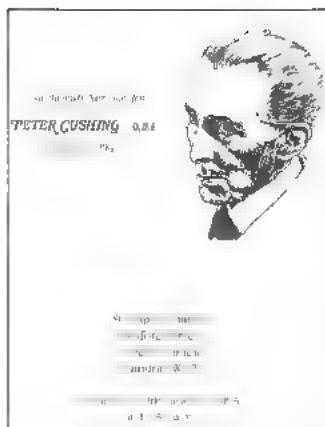
"I know that Cushing would wish me to say this. He was only given a few months to live in 1982, but, for once in his life, he was not on schedule. The fact that we are here 12 years later bears witness to how he baffled the medical profession."

"A lot of us have helped him in our various ways. Peter was very fortunate to have a wonder drug at his fingertips known as Joyce Broughton, without whose dedication this service would have taken place 13 years ago."

"All I want to say is: Goodbye, Pete. Give my love to Helen. We all miss you more than I can say."

The service concluded with an uplifting choral version of Mozart's "Ave Verum Corpus" and the Reverend Canon Hall's prayer and blessing.

Walking out into the chilly air, I dodged the waiting press and took up position to take my own



photographs. Ron Moody emerged first, followed by David Prowse, Don Henderson, Ingrid Pitt, and, unrecognized, David Rintoul.

A bizarre thought passed through my mind. Here was a veritable gallery of movie monsters: Frankenstein's monster from hell, the ghoul, Countess Dracula, and Etoile the werewolf. All in broad daylight, too!

But the one famous face for whom the assembled press was waiting was the Prince of Darkness himself, Christopher Lee. He was besieged by photographers and camera crews immediately on leaving the church, followed by fans and autograph hunters who pursued him hungrily for a signature.

Judging by his expression, Lee found the whole circus quite distasteful, particularly as he was being asked, in the main, to sign copies of the memorial booklet. I inwardly agreed, and silently vowed not to jump on the bandwagon.

On impulse I passed him my booklet, which he signed in silence, and immediately regretted my weakness. Moving away, I returned, cassette recorder in hand.

My question was elementary, but sincere.

"Mr. Lee, if you had to sum up Peter Cushing, briefly, as both a man and as an actor, how would you do that?"

Lee paused momentarily before replying: "I would say he was about as good as you can be in both cases."

Says it all, really, doesn't it, without any fuss? ■

It is, perhaps, nostalgia for that mysterious bygone era, so eloquently described by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, which has helped perpetuate the fascination with the world of Victorian crime in foggy, gas-lit London. He takes the reader into a world before computers and forensic science, a world in which Sherlock Holmes stands head and shoulders above all other heroes of detective fiction.

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# Interview with the Vampire



*The critics  
give praise . . .  
and draw blood.*

First the good news: *INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE* is a splendid movie. Last September, before the film's release, novelist Anne Rice viewed a video, phoned Tom Cruise to tell him how much she loved his performance, then took out a two-page ad in the September 23, 1994 issue of *Variety* to withdraw her dire predictions about the David Geffen production. After the release, she wrote an eight-page *Variety* ad blistering those who dared criticize the film.

Turnabout is not only fair play—it increases the size of one's bank account by millions! And millions!

Rice's support helped give *INTERVIEW* big suck at the box office. Grossing a reported \$38.8 million in its first week and \$91 million after four weeks, the film ended its premiere week in first place, fifth among all-time top debuts. The blockbuster boosted Rice's 1976 novel to number one on the *New York Times* paperback bestseller list. (The sequels, 1985's *The Vampire Lestat* and 1988's *The Queen of the Damned*, joined it in the Top Ten.)

Janet Maslin of *The New York Times* (November 11, 1994) called the movie "as strange and mesmerizing as

it is imaginatively ghastly." More praise came from the Academy, which gave *INTERVIEW* Oscar nominations for art direction and for Elliot Goldenthal's music score. Biting into the role of the wicked Vampire Lestat with wit and confidence, Tom Cruise surprised Anne Rice—and nearly everybody else!

Brad Pitt—who had made no secret of his displeasure in making the film and, specifically, his lack of rapport with his megahunk costar—quickly hopped aboard the love boat, eager to Cruise merrily on his way to Sequel City. The captain: *INTERVIEW*'s director, Neil Jordan. The first officer: Tom Cruise.

"I would do it because Louis is only in the next book for about five minutes," explained Pitt. "He comes in and all the other vampires hate him because he squealed on them. They want to see him on a leash. That might be fun."

Pitt on a leash? He's right—that might be fun!

Stan Winston's makeup helped Cruise look gaunt rather than cute as Lestat. Duane Byrge of *The Hollywood Reporter* described the actor as "chillingly charismatic." Kevin Sessums of *Vanity Fair* (October

*by Lelia Loban and Richard Valley*



**LEFT:** Before becoming a bloodsucker, Louis (Brad Pitt) is oblivious to the charms of wine, women, and song. Rumors flew like bats that actor Pitt was also oblivious to the charms of costar Tom Cruise (pictured **RIGHT** in his post "death scene" makeup).

1994) called Lestat "the bitch god" and Cruise's performance "a startlingly sensual and stirringly malevolent portrayal." (Sessums is on target: There hasn't been as big a male bitch since Clifton Webb died.) Janet Maslin praised the "fiery, mature sexual magnetism he has not previously displayed on the screen" (*New York Times*, November 11, 1994). Siskel and Ebert gave *INTERVIEW* two thumbs up.

Now for the bad news: Oprah Winfrey stalked out of the press screening during an early plantation scene because (she no doubt "tearfully confessed") the violence upset her. In his *New York* magazine review of November 21, 1994, David Denby, one of the few who disliked both Cruise and Pitt, called *INTERVIEW* "exceptionally boring, parochial and remote," adding that the film objectifies women as passive victims.

Denby, to his credit, had a valid complaint. For example, *INTERVIEW*'s female characters repeatedly display full frontal nudity, while the males, including victims, remain fully clothed. (This from director Neil Jordan, who had made Jaye Davidson's dick one of 1993's major plot points!)

Owen Gleiberman of *Entertainment Weekly* called *INTERVIEW* "pretty awful—a hodgepodge of lurid spectacle and stilted, arty talk" (November 18, 1994). Terrence Rafferty, in his *New Yorker* piece (November 21, 1994), argued that the vampire film "genre isn't really robust enough to survive the loss of its crude narrative conventions and its corny religious symbolism." He complained that all Lestat and Louis do together is "suck and bicker, suck and bicker." (Sounds like the latest James Dean bio....)

On *ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT* (November 11, 1994), Leonard Maltin said, "I loathed *INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE*." Rita Kempley put *INTERVIEW* eighth on her "10 Worst" list for 1994 in *The Washington Post* (January 1, 1995). The Post's Desson Howe, among others, thought the 123-minute fangfest dragged.



Brad Pitt's performance got mixed reviews. Rafferty called Pitt "relentlessly dour and inexpressive" and "so monotonous that it's impossible to sympathize with Louis's moral qualms." A lot of the criticism seemed to apply more to the character than to Pitt. Early in the picture, Lestat snaps at Louis, "Merciful Death, how you do love your precious guilt!" By film's end, when Lestat says, "I've had to listen to him whine for centuries," many audience members laughed in agreement.

Looking younger than her 12 years, the intelligent and sophisticated Kirsten Dunst, in a brilliant performance, plays Claudia as one chilling little brat. The final edit minimizes the hints of pedophilia in the script and the novel stresses the parent-child relationship between Claudia, Louis, and Lestat, and never shows the men touching her or speaking of her in an obviously sexual way. (Armand adds "lovers" to Louis' description of his relationship with Claudia, but mumbles the word almost unintelligibly.)

Strong supporting actors include the appealing (and all but overlooked) Christian Slater, who gives the Interviewer, Molloy, just the right mix of curiosity, fear, and bravado. He represents the audience's weakening human point of view as we're increasingly lured into sympathy with the devil. Antonio Banderas brings a seductive presence to the role of Armand, who embodies his vision that vampires must be "powerful, beautiful, and without regret." Stephen Rea is good and nasty, like an insufferable, overgrown schoolboy, as Santiago.

After sampling audience reactions at preview showings, Jordan and Geffen made several last-minute changes. Unhappy with the "funereal" music of George Fenton, who nonetheless gets an onscreen credit, they commissioned the new and now Oscar-nominated score from Elliot Goldenthal mere weeks before the film opened. They also deleted several scenes that contained "a little too much blood and violence," Geffen told *The Los Angeles Times*.



LEFT: The relationships in *INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE* are mostly between males, but, claimed several critics, it was the female characters who were more often than not treated as passive sex objects in the picture. RIGHT: Brad Pitt is a hunk from hell in Stan Winston's special vampire makeup.

*INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE* goes bravely where few films have gone before, but (Oprah and Leonard notwithstanding) doesn't quite have the guts to go far enough. The film tones down the specific sexual imagery of the novel: In one cowardly omission, Lestat and Louis never share a coffin. The final cut also deletes an early script's sadomasochistic scene, in which Louis and Lestat kill the plantation overseer who has just been whipping his slaves. As in the novel, the willing human blood donor in the Paris crypt is a young adolescent boy, but in the final cut, without pressing the boy's body against his, Louis drinks from the hand, not the throat. (If, as Jordan and Geffen moaned time and again, *INTERVIEW*'s bloodsucking had everything to do with food and nothing with sex, why was this change necessary? Had Louis been eating nuts, would they have had him stuff them in his ear?)

Still, the movie remains largely faithful to the novel's mix of horror, sex, and humor, with plenty of scope for controversy. For example, *INTERVIEW* reflects the reality that slavery was a fact of life in 18th-century New Orleans. All humans are less than slaves to a vampire, of course: They're dinner. Throughout the movie, the vampires toss spent bodies aside like empty beer bottles with all the fun sucked out of them. In one gross but fascinating scene, a whore lolling in the ecstasy of Lestat's embrace suddenly realizes she's soaked in her own blood!

As part of the macabre sexual humor, Lestat fingers a gauzy bed canopy and peers in at the pouty, boyish Louis, who sprawls in his silky sheets as if he were Lucy waiting for Dracula. When Louis chooses undeath over true oblivion, he meets Lestat in the Gothic-romance setting of a graveyard. The consummation scene, one of the best in the film, features facial expressions and enough heavy breathing to suggest both oxygen deprivation (from blood loss) and sexual climax. To put it bluntly, Louis comes and goes at the same time.

These vampires respond sensually to anything with blood in it. Like cats, they play with their food. When Lestat bleeds a rat into a wine glass, he wrings out the last crimson drops with care, then absent-mindedly pets the soft, furry carcass as it lies on the dinner table. In another sick, funny scene, the inexperienced Louis flubs seducing a grotesque, middle-aged society matron and becomes so distracted by her yapping poodles that he sucks their blood instead. In several comic child-rearing scenes, the men try to restrain Claudia from dragging her prey into the family manse. Lestat scolds, "How many times have I told you not in the house!"

The film is also faithful to some things in the novel that don't make much sense. Rice's vampires need not fear crosses or stakes through the heart. They show up in mirrors. They can't turn into bats or rats. Yet they have to sleep in coffins. Why these arbitrary distinctions? Inevitably, the movie also compresses a great deal, leaving out the moody journey through Transylvania, for instance.

Some of the most macabre scenes take place in the Theater des Vampires in Paris, with its spectacular, honeycombed underground crypt wherein the hive creatures hide by day. (The viewer does have to suspend disbelief in actors of several nationalities speaking English with varying concepts of a French accent.) In one of the creepiest moments, the theater vampires disrobe a young woman and snuff her in front of the avant-garde theater patrons, who aren't quite jaded enough to pretend they're not shocked, even though they think she's acting. (The sequence comes remarkably close, in its depiction of audience reaction, to echoing the "Springtime for Hitler" number in 1968's *THE PRODUCERS*!)

The film encourages viewers to empathize completely with the vampires, who don't want sex with the naked woman. They want to eat her alive! In this

# Tales from the Hood

by Michael R. Thomas

Let's face it: Since you are reading this particular magazine, the chances are, when it comes to horror movies, you have little tolerance for the half-hearted stuff. You enjoy your shocks at a voltage level absolutely lethal to ordinary human beings, right? Right!

Taking that for granted, here's a little bit of advice regarding TALES FROM THE HOOD (a production of Savoy Films, 40 Acres and a Mule Filmworks, and Undertakers Inc.). Before seeing it, ask yourself if you are prepared to view, along with plenty of traditional fright-film thrills and chills, a bit of—shall we say—the genuine article.

"We wanted the horror to come from reality," explains cowriter/director Rusty Cundieff. "The things that humans do to each other in this movie—the violent things that people do to themselves and to others—is much more horrific than any supernatural elements in this movie."

Cowriter/producer Darin Scott concurs. "We used the established horror anthology form. Films like TALES FROM THE CRYPT and ASYLUM; all those '70s films that were lampooned in the '80s. We did a serious-approach horror film with a subtext of social commentary."

"I did MENACE II SOCIETY, LOVE AND A 45, THE OFFSPRING, and STEPFATHER II. So, I've put a lot of violence on the screen, but I hope I've put it in a context that says something about violence. Movies as far back as the old Westerns and up to the typical cop movies out there today are dangerous because they make violence very palatable, very cool. It's always a perfect solution to problems, it's always utilized for a moral cause, and it's not... gut-wrenching!"

TALES FROM THE HOOD begins when three street thugs (De'Aundre Bonds, Sam Monroe, and DEF COMEDY JAM's Joe Torry) go to a mortuary to retrieve a mislaid package of drugs. There they meet Mr. Simms, the sinister undertaker who, before re-

turning their stash, takes the trio on a guided tour of the supernatural underground. Hovering lovingly over cadavers, the malevolent mortician regales the teens with four tales, recounting in grisly detail the demise of each particular...er...customer.

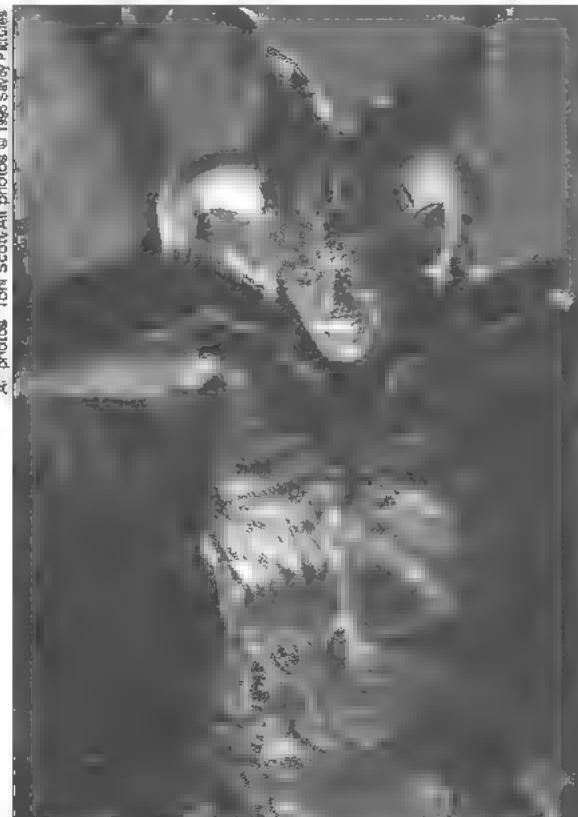
Essaying the role of our horrifying host, Mr. Simms, is the venerable former MOD SQUAD member Clarence Williams III. The actor also puts stress on the film's subtext:

"Sam Goldwyn said, 'If you want to send a message, call Western Union.' Now, this picture has tremendous entertainment value, but it also says something. Black-on-black violence—and violence in general—is horrific. Cundieff and Scott are showing just how it has to stop if we are to have a society where men and women can go to work and not have to worry about whether they or their loved ones are safe from molestation."

In the first tale, starring Wings Hauser, Anthony Griffith, and Tom Wright, a community activist is sadistically beaten and murdered by a gang of rogue cops. Naturally, these subhumanoids in blue don't consider what sometimes happens when you mix vengeance with the supernatural. But, just a moment... just when you think you've enjoyed all the kicks you can get from a revenge-from-beyond-the-grave yarn, at the last moment this terror tale whips around and sucker punches you.

"When I first started to write," says Scott, "Rod Serling was, like, a deity to me. What made THE TWILIGHT ZONE so incredible was its use of the horror/sci-fi/fantasy genre to deliver what were always interesting social and moral messages. Look at the time period during which the show was done. Some of the issues that were dealt with on THE TWILIGHT ZONE were really groundbreaking."

The second tale features director Cundieff as a concerned teacher and David Alan Grier as an abusive stepfather. Yes, one of the "Men on Film" from IN



Mr. Simms (Clarence Williams III) reveals his true self in TALES FROM THE HOOD.



LEFT: Joe Torry, De'Aundre Bonds, and Sam Monroe show up at a funeral parlor in search of drugs. RIGHT: An abusive stepfather (David Alan Grier) gets his just desserts in TALES FROM THE HOOD.

LIVING COLOR. Snap! Snap! Snap! That David Alan Grier. In the mood for a surprise?

"We wanted somebody that you would not know, from the moment you saw him, that he was this evil person," says Cundieff. "So when he walks in, people laugh because it's David. Then, they say, 'Wait a minute . . .' David wanted to do something different from the things he's done on IN LIVING COLOR."

In the third tale, Corbin Bernsen (L. A. LAW) plays a former Ku Klux Klan leader running for Governor. (Hey, hey, hey! Everybody calm down, dammit! This is just a horror movie! Nothing that warped could ever happen in the United States of America . . .)

The fun begins when Bernsen realizes that he's being stalked by the outraged spirits of murdered slaves haunting his Southern mansion. Bernsen's mistake is in thinking that what's happening to him is . . . no big thing. (This segment contains some great stop-motion work by the famed Chiodo Brothers). Cundieff and Scott, thinking Bernsen would never consider such a role, did not contact him. But after reading a copy of the script that someone sent him, he called them, wanting to be a part of the project.

Another most-welcomed volunteer was executive producer Spike Lee (1989's DO THE RIGHT THING, 1992's MALCOLM X). Explains Scott, Spike saw a tape of FEAR OF A BLACK HAT, which Rusty and I co-wrote. It's basically a Rap version of SPINAL TAP! Spike called us and said, 'Hi! I really love this movie!



Can I work with you guys? Whatta ya got, 'cause I can help you get it made! So, we sent him the script and he called back and said, 'I want to do this. I want to help you guys get it set up!' Boom! He's been an immense help. Having him there meant that we were going to make the film that we wanted to make.

"You haven't seen very many black horror films that weren't just spoofs, and you've definitely never seen one that was done with decent resources. I look back at those films and they were just so low-budget, they really didn't have a chance. So, we figured, we've got some money here, let's try to really do something with it that others haven't had an opportunity to do." (Cundieff estimates the TALES budget at between five and eight million dollars)

At last, we come to TALE's fourth and final tale, and it's even scarier than Newt Gingrich! Buckle up, friends!

"Well, that's probably my most favorite story," says Cundieff. "We tried to build to that one. That story came from my wanting to juxtapose archival photographs of actual lynchings with black people killing black people today. The story built out of that and draped around these images."

This is a story about a feral, stone killer called Crazy K (Lamont Bentley). Wounded in a shootout, he is taken to an ugly, torture-chamberlike laboratory (created by KNB EFX Group) where a Dr. Cushing (Rosalind Cash) subjects him to an intensely brutal

LEFT: Mr. Simms (Clarence Williams III) runs the funeral parlor that is the setting for TALES FROM THE HOOD. RIGHT: Director Rusty Cundieff lines up a shot for the Savoy Pictures release.



deprogramming designed to convert ruthless criminals. Recalling *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE*, part of Crazy K's treatment is bombardment with the aforementioned images of lynchings.

"Finding them," says Cundieff, "was very tough. There's no book out there, like, *Pictures of Black People That Were Hanged*. Our researcher found a lot of pictures, but they all came from 30 or 40 different sources and areas. They're buried here and there—for instance, in some old newspaper files in Montgomery, Alabama—and you have to ferret them out. I hope we'll be able to keep most of them in the film. I mean, there is a good chance that the MPAA will probably say that this is too graphic."

"At some of the screenings, the audience reacted strongly to the violence and said we should cut it down, but I said, 'That's the whole point.' I didn't want this to feel like movie violence, but like real violence."

"A younger audience will initially be attracted to this film. When you're young, a typical response to something that makes you uncomfortable is to make a joke of it, to laugh at it so you don't have to open yourself up to it emotionally."

"There was an incident awhile back, when *SCHINDLER'S LIST* was shown to some Bay Area students, and they laughed. There were a lot of black kids there, and everyone got upset because they felt that the laughter was racially motivated, which it wasn't. Those kids would've laughed if it had been a

black film. They were laughing because it was a nervous reaction and they were trying to maintain their pose. Sometimes when you have too much to deal with, you cut yourself off, you block yourself. To get beyond those barriers, we had to take the violence a couple of steps beyond."

A significant part of what keeps the audience in their seats (and squirming) is the elaborate destruction of one of the characters in one of the tales and the surprise transformation of Mr. Simms into his true, horrific form.

"I got into the makeup chair at 7:20AM," recalls Williams. "I was ready for the camera at 3:00PM. The man who did all that was the truly magnificent Screaming Mad George."

Williams concludes: "By couching moral issues in terms of the horror-film genre, Rusty and Darrin are reasonably sure of keeping the audience in their seats, so they'll get the message. My grandmother would give me some awful stuff called 'Three Sixes,' which is a horrible thing you take as a child when you're constipated. She would stick it in orange juice and honey and other things, and it still tasted terrible, but you could make it go down because it was palatable enough for you to sit through." ("Three Sixes?" The sign of the...a coincidence, to be sure.)

Still, this can be said of TALES FROM THE HOOD. Be assured that, after you see it, Three Sixes will not be a necessity!



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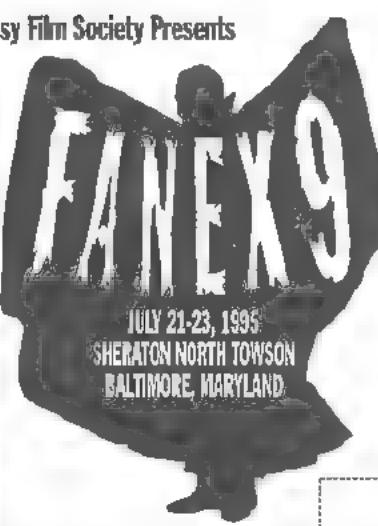


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# Forever and a Knight

## BATMAN FOREVER

by Sean Farrell and Danny Savello

The title may sound a little like one for a Dick Powell/Ruby Keeler musical—one set in a cave, perhaps, with winged mice in tap shoes—but Warner Brothers' BATMAN FOREVER is no such animal. This summer, moviegoers will return again to those mean streets of Gotham City for the third film in the studio's live-action Batman series, and this time those streets are destined to be not quite as mean as before. The first two films, BATMAN (1989) and BATMAN RETURNS (1992), have grossed \$700 million worldwide. Trouble is, BATMAN RETURNS also grossed out a great number of Batfans who felt that its convoluted storyline, featuring a schizoid Catwoman (Michelle Pfeiffer) and slimeball Penguin (Danny DeVito), was simply too dark and gloomy.

On the other hand, BATMAN FOREVER's watchcry is "Lighten up!"—but not too light, of course. After all, it is the Dark Knight we're talking about. Warners' third time at Bats will finally introduce Bruce Wayne's youthful ward, Dick Grayson (Chris O'Donnell), better known as Robin the Boy Wonder. And since the Caped Crusader's latest adversaries are Two-Face (Tommy Lee Jones) and the Riddler (Scarlet Street cover boy Jim Carrey), Batman will certainly need a sidekick for this installment.

The studio hopes the addition of Robin will put a new face on the series—and speaking of new faces, Val Kilmer (at last, at last—a guy with a chin) has taken over the role of the man in the rubber cape and cowl. The series' first Caped Crusader, Michael Keaton, bowed out just before filming began. The official story had it that Keaton simply wanted to pursue other projects, but the real deal may have been that Keaton report-

edly didn't see eye to eye with Joel Schumacher (1994's THE CLIENT), who was brought in to direct BATMAN FOREVER when Tim Burton, who helmed the first two films, decided to take a back seat and co-produce with Peter Macgregor-Scott. It was no secret that Warners hadn't been thrilled with the direction in which Burton was taking their lucrative Bat-franchise—literally, in the case of the Penguin's homestead, down the sewer. Nor was it a secret that Keaton wasn't keen on the vast amount of screen time lavished on Pfeiffer and DeVito in BATMAN RETURNS.

According to Akiva Goldsman, who shares BATMAN FOREVER's screenwriting credits with Lee Batchler and Janet Scott Batchler, Kilmer's casting hasn't changed anything vital. "This was always going to be a different kind of look at Batman. Because he's Val, he's also younger. He is also a Batman who is really trying to better understand why he does what he does. He's a Batman who's trying to give due consideration to what it means to get in a cape and run around beating people up all night. In that sense, he's a Batman poised for change."

In Bruce Wayne's case, a change may be psychologically beneficial. But what about Dick? As first detailed in the landmark 38th issue of *Detective Comics*, the boy's parents, circus acrobats, were killed by beefy mob boss Tony Zucco, whose M.O. was shaking down respectable business owners.

When the circus owner refused to pay "insurance," Zucco ordered a goon to pour acid on the Flying Graysons' trapeze rope. During their performance of the triple spin, John and Mary Grayson fell to their deaths—this while young Dick watched in horror.



Ruffles have ridges—and so do Batman's ears, in the new costume designed for Val Kilmer in BATMAN FOREVER.



LEFT and RIGHT: Batman and Robin (Val Kilmer and Chris O'Donnell) meet at last in BATMAN FOREVER. PAGE 39 TOP: The Flying Graysons are due for a fall in the "Robin's Reckoning" episode of BATMAN: THE ANIMATED SERIES, recently retitled THE ADVENTURES OF BATMAN AND ROBIN. PAGE 39 BOTTOM: Chris O'Donnell is the new Dick Grayson.

In BATMAN FOREVER, Robin's circus origin is presented almost exactly the same as it was in the comic, with one major exception: This time, it is Two-Face, not Tony Zucco, who kills Dick's parents.

Actually, the change is relatively minor when one considers the initial plans for the Boy Wonder's bow. Robin was set to fly in the first two films, but the character was dropped—twice—at the last minute.

In BATMAN, the Flying Graysons would have been performing on a circus float in the Joker's parade when the fatal "accident" occurred. Thus it would have been Jack "Joker" Napier (Jack Nicholson) who was responsible for the tragedy, "creating" Robin in much the same way that he had "created" Batman—who, in turn, had "created" the Joker by dropping him in a vat of acid. (Warners doubtless decided that there hadn't been so much onscreen "creationism" since ELMER GANTRY, and wisely simplified matters by dropping the Graysons—much more gently than had originally been planned.)

In the first-draft script of BATMAN RETURNS, simply called BATMAN II, the entire concept of the Flying Graysons took a nose-dive. Before taking up residence at Wayne Manor, the Boy Wonder—introduced in the script as a "shadowy figure," then

dubbed "the kid," and finally christened "Dick" would have been a tough homeless kid living in Gotham City's version of New York's Central Park. (Actually, he would have been a tough homeless kid who likes to dress up in a bright red gymnast's costume with a tiny yellow cape.) This time, Tim Burton actually got as far as casting Marlon Wayans in the role—but again the studio killed cocky Robin.

Now we have BATMAN FOREVER, with the Boy Wonder's sawdust and spangles origin almost entirely restored. (The hands-down winner for authenticity is the two-part "Robin's Reckoning" episode of television's BATMAN: THE ANIMATED SERIES.) As in *Detective Comics*, Bruce Wayne will witness the tragic moment under the big top.

"Bruce sees, before him, the echo of that which formed him," Goldsman says. "It's very resonant. It allows you to revisit Bruce's origin in a way that's very compelling."

"There was a notion Joel had, from the very beginning, that I found tremendously appealing—which is that we don't want to see a neophyte, acolyte 14-year-old boy who is taken in by this Dark Avenger. What we want to see is a more realistic portrayal of the kind of kid who grew up in the circus."

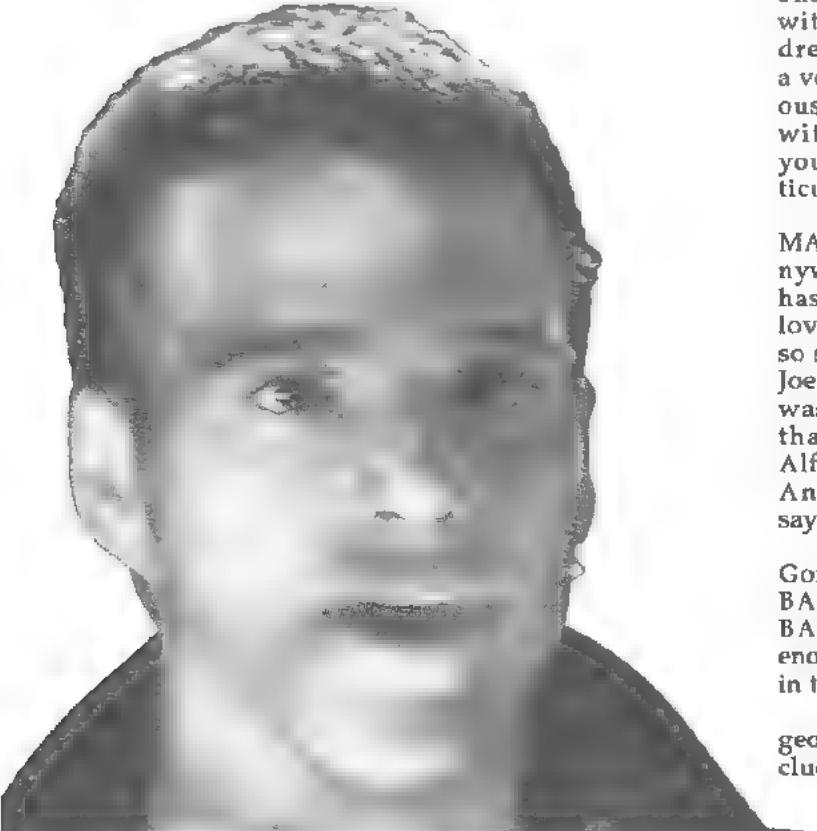
This is a Robin who is a gypsy. He's in his late teens, and he's a kid who had no time for the high-society world of Gotham City, the world in which Bruce Wayne travels."

Goldsman doesn't consider it a problem that Batman and Robin are much closer in age than would have been the case with O'Donnell playing opposite Keaton. "I think it's good. Val is still older than Chris. There's a 14 year age difference, which is a long time. What you have is Bruce Wayne thinking, 'This boy is a carnival mirror of myself. I am watching this boy become me.' In a way, that's made more resonant by the close proximity in age."

O'Donnell is the fourth actor to appear on the big screen as Dick Grayson, following in the green booted footsteps of Douglas Croft (the 1943 serial BATMAN), Johnny Duncan (the 1949 sequel BATMAN AND ROBIN), and Burt Ward (the 1966 film version of the campy TV classic of the '60s.) Ward and his self-styled "million dollar face" never went much further than the role of Robin. Duncan is happily retired to his hometown in Missouri. Croft, who played Ronald Reagan's character as a boy in the classic KINGS ROW (1942), has vanished without a trace.

Michael Keaton's objections notwithstanding, the black heart of every Batfilm is the villains. With such heavyweights as Tommy Lee Jones and Jim Carrey chewing up Gotham as the city's newest bad guys, it's amazing that the battle for the spotlight hasn't been worse on BATMAN FOREVER than it was on BATMAN RETURNS.

How have the writers balanced the screen time for Two-Face and the Riddler? "Very carefully!" Goldsman laughs. "Do they have equal time in terms of lines? I haven't counted them. But do they have equal weight? Absolutely. That's part of the pleasure of having those two characters. You want it constantly going back and forth between them."



The scripter found working with the film's cast a very favorable experience—and so did his fiancée, when she first met Val Kilmer. "He carries himself with utter physical confidence," Goldsman says of the Batstar. "It comes across both in life and on the screen, and it's very attractive. My fiancée was on the set when Val played a scene with his shirt off, and I kept saying, 'All right, honey, we gotta go' but she just wouldn't leave! Besides being an incredibly charismatic guy, Val really has that appeal. Interestingly enough—and it's not something you'd expect from a Batman movie—it's very sexy. Not erotic, per se, but it's very sexy."

Even the villains were charming in their own way. "You can't dream of a more fun moment than putting Jim Carrey and Tommy Lee Jones together in a scene. This is the second movie that Joel and I have done with Tommy Lee, and he's all the things that everybody says. He went to Harvard, he's a trained Shakespearean actor, he's thoroughly cultured—and witty as hell! And Jim is a firecracker! He's a writer's dream, because he really does follow the script. Jim is a very skilled improvisationist, but he's very courteous and respectful of the script. He's like a genius with a coloring book: He stays within the lines, but you'd never imagine that anyone would use that particular color."

Some old (and welcome) faces do return in BATMAN FOREVER. Michael Gough is back as Alfred Pennyworth, and the word is that Bruce's faithful butler has more to do 'round Stately Wayne Manor. "We love Michael," Goldsman states unequivocally. "He's so sweet! It's Joel's concept that he have more scenes. Joel had some interesting ideas going in, and one was that Bruce and Alfred were more Holmes/Watson than master/manservant. That allowed us to give Alfred more of an opportunity to involve himself. And Alfred has much to say—or at least, some to say—about young men with their minds on revenge."

Pat Hingle also returns as Commissioner James Gordon, a strong character that was all but ignored in BATMAN and BATMAN RETURNS. "Gordon is in BATMAN FOREVER," Goldsman affirms. "Is he in enough to please the fans who felt he was nonexistent in the first two films? That I couldn't answer."

BATMAN FOREVER features a gaggle of outrageous lead characters—plus a supporting cast that includes the likes of Nicole Kidman, Drew Barrymore,



LEFT: Harvey "Two-Face" Dent was played by Billy Dee Williams in BATMAN (1989), but the role now belongs to Tommy Lee Jones. RIGHT: Val Kilmer and Nicole Kidman gaze skyward.

and Ed Begley Jr.—but Goldsman is confident that Joel Schumacher is the perfect director for the task. "Joel is the king of handling many characters in a way that's economical and poignant. If you think about his movies, they're virtually all ensemble movies. Even the last movie we did together, *THE CLIENT*, is an ensemble movie. *ST. ELMO'S FIRE* was, too. These are movies that deftly handle a bunch of characters."

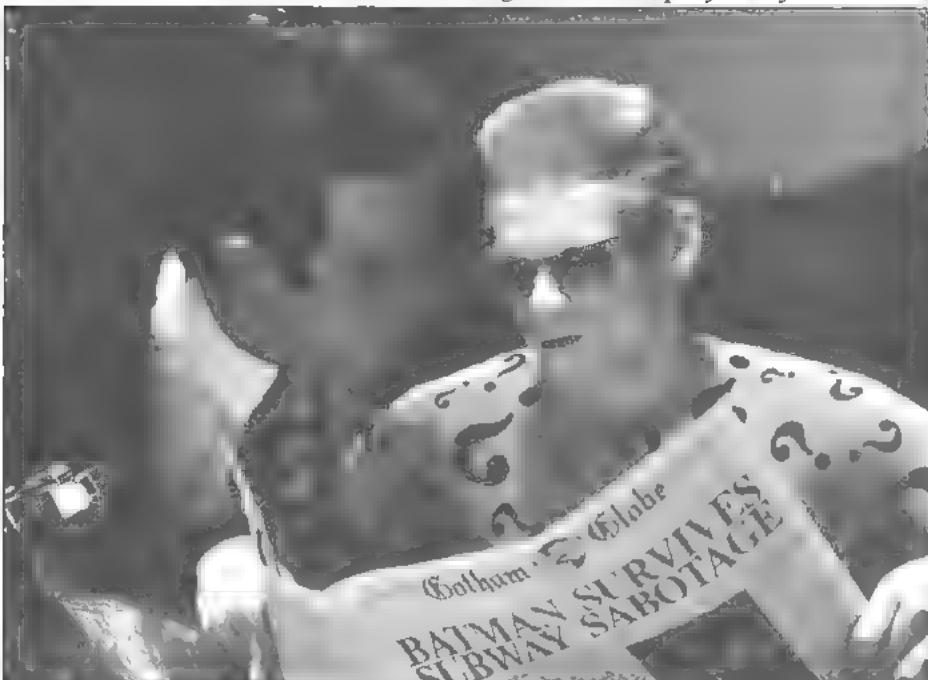
"If you walk onto a project like this thinking, 'Oh, my God, there's no room,' then you're serving your own fear. But if you go in thinking, 'What we need for this pallet to have the colors we want are all these new characters,' then you suddenly find it balances nicely. Joel's vision of this movie was to create

a new Batman, and part of that is a different look for Gotham City, a different look for the characters."

The filmmakers' new vision apparently includes yet another new costume for Robin. "We have two," Goldsman says. "The trailer shows the costume at the end, and then, to begin with, he has his circus acrobat's costume."

Goldsman has no doubt that *BATMAN FOREVER* will measure up as quality entertainment. "There's more motion to this. There's a variety of light and texture and color in such a way that it's very much like a carnival ride. I'm very lucky that Joel is an incredibly inclusive filmmaker. I couldn't hope to have been part of a better team than on this one."

LEFT: Two-Face and the Riddler (Tommy Lee Jones and Jim Carrey) battle the Bat with public transport. RIGHT: Naturally, Two-Face has two girlfriends (played by Drew Barrymore and Debi Mazar).



# What the Butler Saw!

# Michael Gough

*interviewed by  
Steven Eramo and Jessie Liley*

With over 50 years experience in the acting profession, Michael Gough has been cast in roles ranging from Vincent Van Gogh to Alfred Pennyworth. What has remained a constant is the well-rounded professionalism and sincere dedication with which Gough approaches each part. Add to this the actor's surprising humility about his job and you have someone who stands out in a business more often concerned with glamour and money than talent.

The actor began his career in Britain's repertory theater. His stage work includes appearances with the National Theatre in such works as *A MONTH IN THE COUNTRY*, *DON JUAN*, and *THE CHERRY ORCHARD*.

His early film appearances included roles in *SARABAND* (1948), *THE MAN IN THE WHITE SUIT* (1951), *THE SWORD AND THE ROSE* (1953), and *RICHARD III* (1955).

It was British director Terence Fisher who hired the actor for a part in the 1957 Hammer hit *HORROR OF DRACULA*, beginning Gough's long association with fright flicks. Over the next several years, both Fisher and American-born producer Herman Cohen cast the actor in their respective productions, including *HORRORS OF THE BLACK MUSEUM* (1959), *PHANTOM OF THE OPERA* (1962), *BERSERK* (1967), and *TROG* (1970). While appearing alongside such distinguished players as Christopher Lee, Peter Cushing, and Joan Crawford, Gough also shared the screen with a gigantic ape named *KONGA* (1961) as well as a number of unruly large cats in *BLACK ZOO* (1963).

Nor were Gough's horror roles confined to Hammer and Cohen productions. His credits include *THE SKULL* (1965), *DR. TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS*

(1965), *THEY CAME FROM BEYOND SPACE* (1967), and *THE CRIMSON CULT* (1968).

During the '60s, Gough's TV performances were as prolific as those on stage and in the movies. Loyal viewers of *THE AVENGERS* remember the actor in the 1965 adventure "The Cybernauts," playing the crippled creator of some deadly killer robots. A year later, he turned up in the BBC series *DOCTOR WHO* as the Celestial Toymaker, a malevolent mandarin trickster who traps the Doctor and his companions in his fantasy world. During the filming of the program, its star, William Hartnell, was away on holiday during two of the four episodes, leaving Gough to pit his wits against a set of prerecorded voice-overs!

*SMILEY'S PEOPLE*, *CAMPION*, *BLAKE'S SEVEN*, and *INSPECTOR MORSE* are just a few of the television projects that have kept the actor visible over recent years. Gough also made a welcome return to the world of time travel as Counselor Hedin in the 1983 *DOCTOR WHO* adventure "The Arc of Infinity." He continued to make an impact on the big screen as well, appearing in such films as *TOP SECRET* (1984), *OXFORD BLUES* (1984), *OUT OF AFRICA* (1985), and Tim Burton's *BATMAN* (1989) and its sequel, *BATMAN RETURNS* (1992). Recently, the actor spent a considerable amount of time in California reprising his role as butler Alfred in *BATMAN FOREVER*.

Though surprised to discover that fans are interested in hearing about his varied career, the affable Gough happily took time out from a recent batbreak to speak to *Scarlet Street* about the life and times of a jobbing actor. Characteristically, his concern was not for his loss of leisure time, but for ours....



LEFT: Bruce Wayne and Alfred Pennyworth (Val Kilmer and Michael Gough) spruce up the Batcave in BATMAN FOREVER. RIGHT: The iceman killeth in HORRORS OF THE BLACK MUSEUM (1959)

**Michael Gough:** You haven't had much of a holiday, have you?

**Scarlet Street:** No, not much—but then that's show biz. Isn't that what they say?

**MG:** I believe they do say that. (Laughs)

**SS:** Is it all right to tape the conversation? We don't want any mistakes.

**MG:** Don't worry about that. It's all going to be rubbish, anyway, you know. I'm absolutely hopeless at interviews, especially on the telephone. If I'm talking to somebody,

it's easier, isn't it? But when I'm on the phone, it all gets a bit confused. I just get very nervous. It isn't you that makes me nervous, understand. It's the telephone that makes me nervous.

**SS:** Our editor is like that. That's why he rarely conducts interviews.

**MG:** Clever him! (Laughs)

**SS:** Rumor has it that Alfred has more to do in BATMAN FOREVER than he had in BATMAN RETURNS

**MG:** Yes, I think that's true. Certainly there's more screen time. I

think he's a much more rounded figure, in a funny way. He's more jokey; he's amusing. The whole script, perhaps, is a little more amusing than either of the other two. This is the third one I've done, as you well know, and Joel Schumacher is an absolute darling. He loves jokes. Every day's a party on the set. It's wonderful.

**SS:** So the tone is different than it was with Tim Burton?

**MG:** Well, they're different personalities. Both Joel and Tim are

LEFT: Michael Gough poses with one of his feline friends in BLACK ZOO (1963). RIGHT: Melissa Stribling and Michael Gough played the innocent couple caught up in the HORROR OF DRACULA (1958).



totally different, and Michael and Val are totally different. They're both actors and both directors, but they are so different and the relationship is different. The thing is, we do change our personalities with whoever we're talking to—whether it's our mother or grandmother, we are different persons. I inevitably change without meaning to, so that my relationship to these guys is inevitably different.

*SS: The relationship between Bruce Wayne and Alfred will obviously change as well, now that Bruce is being played by Val Kilmer. Is there more of a camaraderie?*

**MG:** Well, it's a different camaraderie, really. I've worked with Val before, so that we didn't come to each other as strangers. We got on very well the first time we worked together, and I'm supporting him for the second time and enjoying it very much indeed. And Michael and I were mates, you know! We were mates, too, so it was very good. It was very good. But the relationship between Alfred and Bruce in the new script is a much closer one.

*SS: Tim Burton is a big fan of horror movies. Did he personally cast you?*

**MG:** Yes, he did. I always rather dread knowing exactly how I got a part. I always think, "This is my last one! I'll never work again!" But, yes, I think he did. He adores horror movies and terrible films of one kind and another. It's his favorite fruit.

*SS: So he was familiar with your appearances in horror films?*

**MG:** Yes, he was.

*SS: Does it bother you that many fans—Tim Burton included—know you mainly from your roles in such films as HORRORS OF THE BLACK MUSEUM and BERSERK?*

**MG:** No, no, no—it doesn't bother me one little bit. I'm a jobbing actor. I'm what's known as a featured supporting actor, and so I earn my living acting. Come Christmas, if I'm out of work I'll play the back end of a horse in the pantomime. I've got to be working. All my life, I've had to be working—but I have never actually played the back end of a horse! (Laughs)

*SS: Did you always want to be an actor, or did you have any other profession in mind?*

**MG:** I had no qualifications for a "sensible job." It was when I saw Rex Harrison in SAILORS DON'T CARE that I decided that acting was what I wanted to do—and, I

must admit, the prospect of actresses was enticing.

*SS: Did you study acting?*

**MG:** I was very fortunate in that I trained at the Old Vic. Class work had to fit in with working on stage with the Old Vic company, playing small parts and crowd scenes, but the opportunity to watch Michael Redgrave, Laurence Olivier, Jessica Tandy, Alec Guinness, and countless others was invaluable.

*SS: What was your first acting job?*

**MG:** My first professional acting job was with a company called the Cornish Shakespearean Festival Society. We did a new play every week, rehearsing on Sundays and Mondays and performing a matinee and evening performance every day. There were no rest days.

*SS: Well, we're glad you got some free time to talk to us.*  
**BATMAN FOREVER** is the first movie to feature the character of Robin. How has that changed the dynamics of the Batman movies?

**MG:** Well, it's really rather interesting. It's lovely for me, because Alfred brought Batman up; his parents

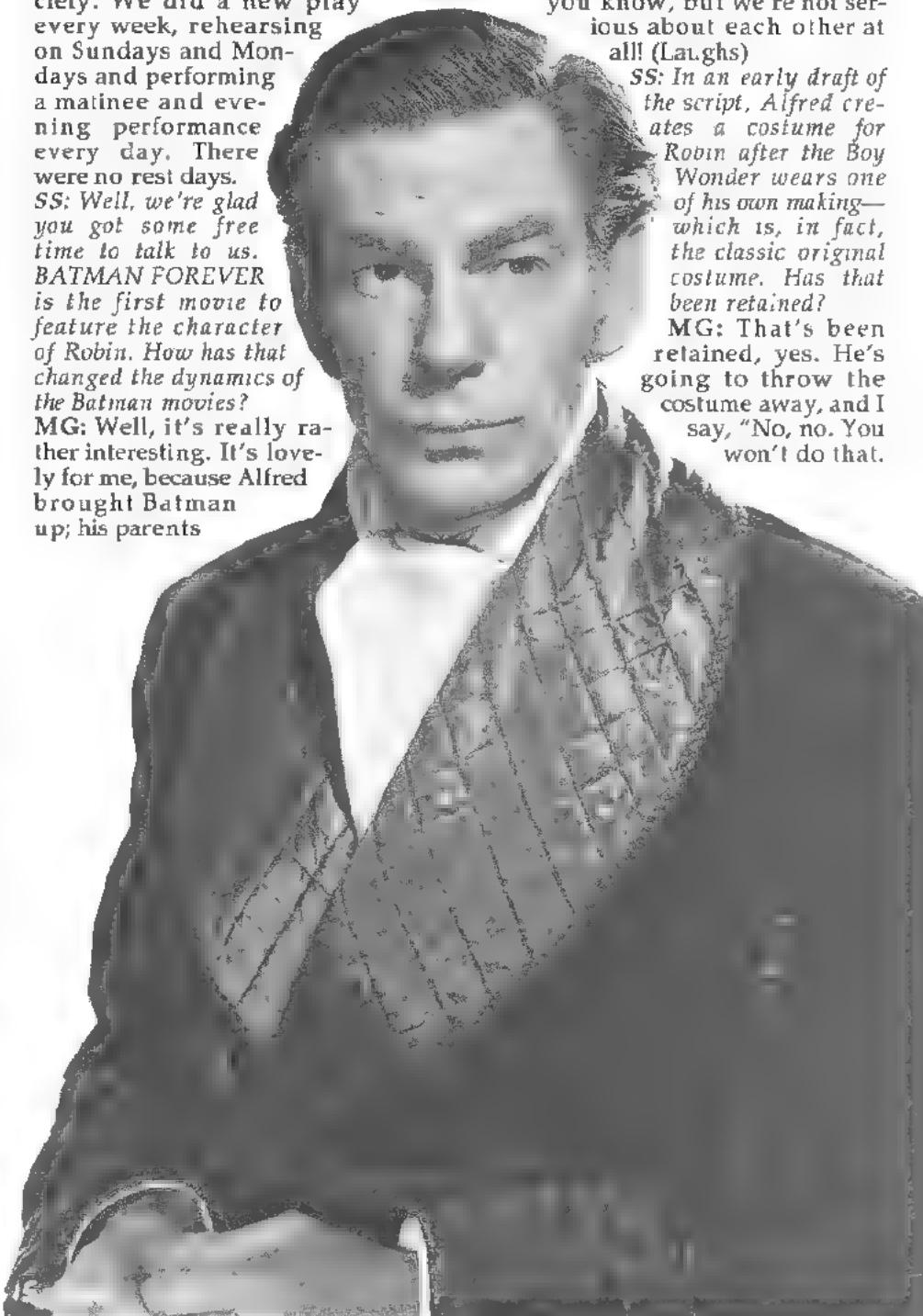
were killed and Alfred brought him up as a child. Well, now, Alfred's actually doing it again, so to speak, with Robin. Before, it was always in hindsight, because Batman's grown up. Now, one gets a sort of rounded picture of Alfred's relationship with Batman, because his relationship to Robin is what his relationship was to Batman when he was Robin's age.

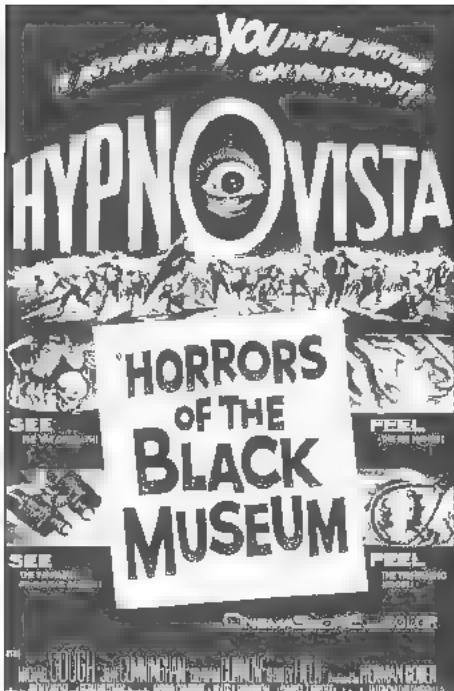
*SS: Chris O'Donnell plays Robin.*

**MG:** He's really nice. I mean, you couldn't wish for two nicer guys to work with than Val and Chris. They are both very funny. We're all very serious about our work, you know, but we're not serious about each other at all! (Laughs)

*SS: In an early draft of the script, Alfred creates a costume for Robin after the Boy Wonder wears one of his own making—which is, in fact, the classic original costume. Has that been retained?*

**MG:** That's been retained, yes. He's going to throw the costume away, and I say, "No, no. You won't do that."





**LEFT:** It actually didn't put you in the picture, but what the hell . . . **RIGHT:** Michael Gough played it for laughs in *NO PLACE LIKE HOMICIDE!* (1962), a comic version of Boris Karloff's 1933 film *THE GHOUL*.

No, I'm going to put this away in a careful place."

**SS:** Did you research the character of Alfred by reading the comic books?

**MG:** Yes, I did. But that was some time ago, and I haven't looked at them since. I purposely haven't looked at them, because I've got to take it off the script, not off the comic book. What's written for me is what I'm doing. But before I start work, I do the research. I've done historical films and played historical characters, but I do all the prep before I start working. When I start working, I throw it away and get on with playing the script and that's it. A bit pompous, that, isn't it? Never mind! (Laughs)

**SS:** Jim Carrey is the Riddler . . .

**MG:** Isn't he marvelous? He's absolutely incredible!

**SS:** . . . and Tommy Lee Jones is Two-Face. The movie looks like it's going to be pretty funny.

**MG:** In this film, a lot of it has to do with Joel. The funny thing about my relationship with Joel is that sometimes he's like my son. He's very naughty, you know? Then sometimes he's very wise and he's like my father! (Laughs) I'm very, very fond of him, and he's my friend. They're all nice. The director, the producer—they're all available, they're open to suggestions. We're a good group.

**SS:** You've been in big budget films such as *BATMAN FOREVER* and

*you've also made quickies . . . KONGA*, for instance. What's the difference between a Joel Schumacher film and a Herman Cohen production?

**MG:** Oh, well, it's totally different. You don't have time with a Herman Cohen production to actually explore anything, do you? You're working against the clock a lot of the time. And they are very sort of weird and wonderful stories. (Laughs) But I enjoyed making them. Well, I enjoy working. The thing that I really enjoy, as far as my work is concerned, is the theater—but you've got to be more fussy in the theater, because you're not really doing it for money. You're doing it for the role you're playing. So many films one does, one does for the money. What we call G.T.M.A.R.—grab the money and run!

**SS:** Well, you've worked steadily, that's for certain.

**MG:** I've been fortunate in being in the middle of the "bathing order"—not too expensive and not starry. I was "promising" for years; now I'm "reliable."

**SS:** Are there projects that are especially dear to you?

**MG:** Sometimes I'll do a film for nothing, because it's something I want to do. For instance, Derek Jarman couldn't pay anything but peanuts, bless his heart, but it was a great joy to work for him. I like making small films. I did a film

about Van Gogh called *VINCENT THE DUTCHMAN*. It was for the BBC. It won, I think, a couple of awards, but it's pretty much disappeared. But that's the sort of thing I enjoy doing—with a small crew, a tiny crew, and just battling away. We were in the south of France for six months doing another, one-hour film. There were just four of us doing it. We picked up artists to play various roles, and the script was written as we went along by David Hugh Meyer Zeckerling directed it, and we worked very hard for six months. Then we had one month out in the middle, because we'd used the summer and we wanted to go all the seasons—so we took a month out in the middle. I played a transvestite! (Laughs) A transvestite in a film which never quite got finished. It was a real corker!

**SS:** What a shame it wasn't finished.

**MG:** There was another television film that we did in Africa. I played Dr. Livingstone. We went to a place where the children had never actually seen a white man before. They were just sort of reaching up—not to touch my white face, but my hair. They wanted to eat my hair. The little darlings! I absolutely adored them, they were so lovely. And bright as buttons. That sort of thing I enjoy. Another



# Where in the World is Alfred?

by Sean Farrell and Danny Savello

If comic-book fans have noticed that the Batcave seems a little empty lately, it's because Alfred Pennyworth, Bruce Wayne's faithful butler, medic, and all around Man Friday, has been absent since the tumultuous "Nightfall" storyline. Apparently, the villainous Bane had done more to hurt the Batman than simply breaking the Caped Crusader's back.

"Alfred went away last year when Bruce Wayne's back was broken," says Dennis O'Neil, Group Editor at DC comics and the man guiding the Dark Knight's deeds. "Wayne still insisted on pursuing the people he was pursuing. Alfred finally broke down and said, 'I can't stand to watch you destroy yourself. I'm not going to do it. I resign.' And he walked out. Batman—being the world's greatest detective—could find him in about 10 seconds, but he's respecting Alfred's right of privacy."

Exactly where did Alfred go? Home, of course. "He's in London, where he originated. Alfred will encounter someone that he feels may be his son—a teenage actor. This is what Alfred was before migrating to America to become a butler."

Told that not many people knew this about Alfred, O'Neil laughingly replies, "Well, we didn't either until we wrote it."

"Alfred will enlist Nightwing—Dick Grayson, the original Robin—to help him bail the boy out of trouble. In the course of the story, something will happen which will change Alfred's mind about his station in life. It was written by our British Batman writer, Allan Grant, who actually lives in a 12th-century church about 60 miles outside London. Great place to write Batman."

The artwork for Alfred's return is being handled by the legendary Dick Giordano.

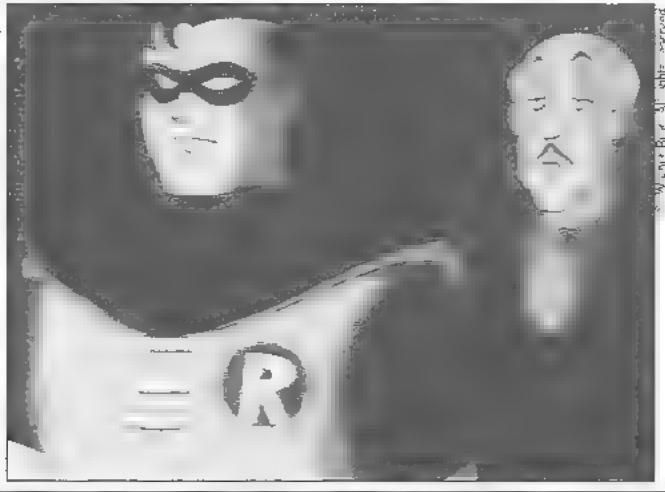
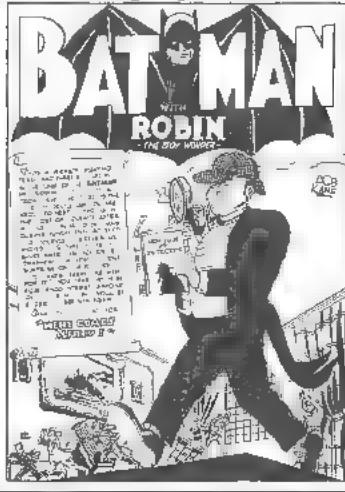
Batfans have come to know Alfred as being completely indispensable to Bruce Wayne/Batman. Ironically, that wasn't always the case. "He started off as a chubby little cockney comic relief and disappeared for a while," O'Neil says. "He came back, I think, because of the '60s TV show. They decided they needed Alfred—and I think that was a case where the comic books took a cue from the other medium—and he came back in pretty much his present incarnation.

"I had found it very tough to write BATMAN without Alfred, because he's a great sounding board. He provides us with comic relief. We have given him a natural, dry wit. If you're in the middle of a long passage of exposition, Alfred can very logically say something funny in the middle of that. When old Bats gets a little too full of himself, Alfred can puncture that particular balloon. He's one of the best supporting characters in the entire field."

Indeed, Alfred Pennyworth is a character of such depth that he also stands out in such other mediums as film and TV. "I think Michael Gough does a great job in the Batman movies, and the other fine job of doing Alfred, apart from what comes out of this office, is on BATMAN: THE ANIMATED SERIES. Alfred is played by Efram Zimbalist. We are very pleased with other people's use of our character."

With such a valued and essential figure as Alfred, O'Neil feels that there was never any doubt that he would soon return. "I mean, I wrote the story where he leaves, and that was not an original part of our continuity. I thought it would strengthen that particular story in dramatic terms, to put Bruce all alone facing this problem. But I also thought, 'Yeah, people will love to see Alfred come back.'"

LEFT: Alfred (Michael Gough) tunes in his favorite Batchannel in BATMAN RETURNS (1992). CENTER: A pudgy Alfred Pennyworth made his comic-book debut in this 1943 story. RIGHT: Alfred counsels the Boy Wonder in the "Robin's Reckoning" episode of BATMAN: THE ANIMATED SERIES.





© 1961 American International Picture

**LEFT:** Contrary to the poster art, it wasn't a frightened damsel in the big ape's paw in the final, fun-filled moments of *KONGA* (1961). Nope, it was Michael Gough. **RIGHT:** "Darn, darn, darn—I thought tonight it was my turn to be the handsome stranger in the raincoat!"

### MICHAEL GOUGH

*Continued from page 44*

film that I did for the BBC, which also won awards, was *TO THE LIGHTHOUSE*. As I said, I enjoyed doing Derek Jarman films. I did three for him. They were exciting to do, because they were....

*SS: Different?*

**MG:** Different! Totally different! I mean, they were as different as soap opera is from grand opera. An absolutely different medium altogether. I find that very exciting.

*SS: How did you become involved in playing the Celestial Toymaker on DOCTOR WHO?*

**MG:** I guess one's turn has to come 'round eventually. Mine has to come 'round, hopefully, pretty often, because I am a hostage to fortune. Too many wives and several children.

*SS: You've worked with several stars of horror films. Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee....*

**MG:** Well, Peter Cushing and I worked in the theater first. We shared a dressing room. One time, our dresser won the pools, and he was so excited. I had to read them out and Peter had to check them, and the dresser stood outside the door while we were doing it. He couldn't believe it. We said, "Yes. You've won." And he said, "Don't tell anyone! For God's sake, I've no idea what I've won yet!" That

night, when the show was over and the pub was open, everybody had free drinks on the poor guy. (Laughs) We gave him a stamped addressed envelope to write us at our next date, and we said, "Just let us know how much you've won, because we're really worried about it!" But it was okay. I think he won £15,000.

*SS: A tidy sum!*

**MG:** So that was one time I worked with Peter. We were very close, sharing a dressing room, and we got on very well together.

*SS: You were reunited on HORROR OF DRACULA.*

**MG:** On that, of course, he had a lot to do and I didn't have so much, so I didn't really see very much of him except on the soundstage. He was very, very serious—well, not serious so much as a concentrated worker. Very concentrated, and a lovely man. I never really knew Christopher Lee that well, but he's a fine actor.

*SS: Let's discuss directors. What's it like working with Tim Burton?*

**MG:** Tim is wonderful. In his own particular way, Tim is wonderful. He's kind of like a naked nerve; he's—bzzzzz—like that. But he's terribly generous, and he'll say, "Okay, I don't like it that way. You're not happy. This is what we're gonna do." And he's very good. He gets a great excitement

going, but at the same time he lets you relax in it. He doesn't make you get excited; he gets excited about the project. He loves doing what he's doing. He loves directing. Also, Tim likes actors. A lot of directors really don't like actors, you know.

*SS: So we've heard*

**MG:** But he likes actors. Joel, of course, adores actors.

*SS: How does he get you going?*

**MG:** Well, you play the scene. Then he'll come up and whisper in your ear something like, "Try it a little faster. Just a little faster." And you say, "Okay, Joel." And off you go and then he says, "Fabulous! Great! We're doing it once more!" And in your ear he says, "You're going too fast." (Laughs)

*SS: How about Ken Russell?*

**MG:** Oh, Ken Russell is daring. He sort of pushes it. He'll say, "Now, would you mind very much taking off your trousers... and your knickers?" (Laughs) He's fine. He gets on with it, gets cracking. Very daring, Ken.

*SS: And Terence Fisher?*

**MG:** Oh, well, Terry Fisher—he was very serious, but in a way it was a bit tongue-in-cheek with him, you know? "Now, we're going to have a good laugh here. Because you rip the guy up, his guts fall out,

*Continued on page 104*



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## Article and interview by Sean Farrell and Jessie Lilley

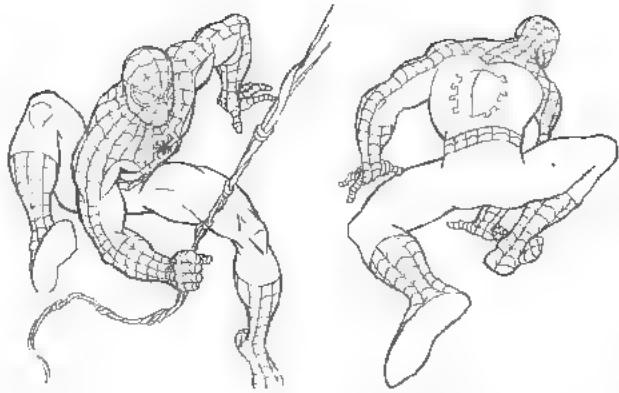
Spider man, created by Stan Lee and artist Steve Ditko, has proven to be one of the most durable characters in comic-book history. Over three decades of battling vile villains on the mean streets of New York will culminate this year in *The Amazing Spider-Man's* 400th issue, as well as a new line of action figures from Toy Biz, Inc. Plans are proceeding for Spidey's big-screen debut in a live-action feature. Perhaps best of all, fans of Peter Parker's wall-crawling alter ego can also look forward to a new Saturday morning animated series from FOX.

"What we're going to do with this series is the very best job we can in bringing Spider-man to the screen," says John Semper, the driving force behind the animated SPIDER-MAN. "I don't speak for Marvel; I don't speak for any other show that Marvel is doing or is going to do. What I do know is that SPIDER-MAN was important to me when I was a kid. My name is now attached to it, and I'm going to do the best that I can to make it the best show on TV."

Semper is not a big fan of BATMAN: THE ANIMATED SERIES' film-noir look, and is quick to point out that SPIDER-MAN will be much different in tone. "We're not going for a distinctive look that can be labeled. We wanted a much brighter, much more colorful New York. Spider-man himself is a very colorful character. He'd look silly in a noirish kind of background. Bob Richardson, who is the animation supervising producer, has chosen a design style that is very clear, uncluttered, and cinematically effective, without the show getting lost in its own style."

Though some of the backgrounds for SPIDER-MAN are accomplished via computer graphics, the bulk of the work consists of traditional animation handled by the Japanese firm Tokyo Movie Shinsha. "They are the best animation house in the world doing TV animation. Period," Semper enthuses. "The computer animation is being done by a company called Kronos, and we have a helluva time syncing up and getting the cell animation to be properly married with the computer animation. Some people just don't like the idea of mixing computer animation with cell animation. We'll continue doing it, because it's the only way that we can get the web slinging to work, with Spider-man swooping in and out of all those wonderful buildings."

*Sean Farrell, a staff writer for Scarlet Street, has also written for The Scream Factory.*



With the amount of control wielded by Semper—he serves as producer and story editor, and has scripted a number of shows ("I also clean up the offices in the evenings")—longtime Spidey-philes may wonder if Stan "The Man" Lee is involved at all with the new series. But, as Semper himself exclaims, "Stan is very involved in this show. It is wonderful working with a writer as good as Stan. He's every bit as creatively fresh today as he was years ago, and he's a great friend, great guy to know, great guy to work with—I can't say enough about him! I've known Stan for nine years, and he's my hero. I paid good money to see him lecture when I was in college. When I finally met him, I found him to be no less magical than I had always imagined him to be."

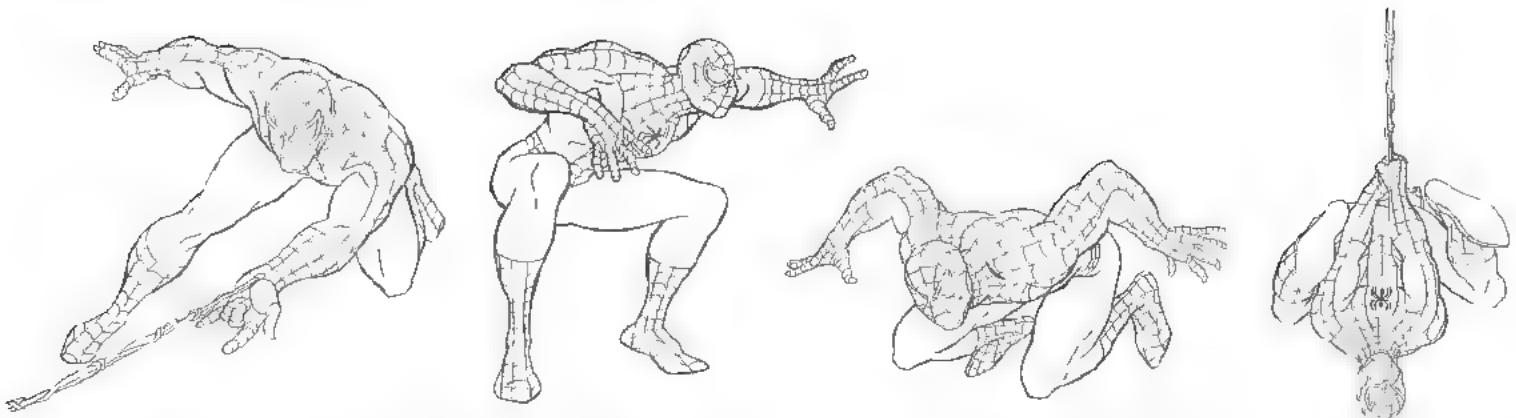
Semper's original background was as a film editor in post-production animation, a position he held at Ruby-Spears, a sister company to Hanna Barbera. It was a job that exposed him to the entire process of making cartoons. "I was dealing with producers, directors, inkers, painters, checkers, sound cutters, sound mixers . . ."

Semper went on to write and develop FRAGGLE ROCK for Jim Henson. He also found steady work as story editor—with writing partner Cynthia Friedlob—on SCOOBY-DOO

This last project gave him the chance to insert a favorite literary character into a script. "In my animation career, I always try to do a Sherlock Holmes story," Semper says. "Years ago, when I did SCOOBY-DOO, I did a Sherlock Holmes SCOOBY-DOO! By the way, one of my last series at Hanna Barbera was THE THIRTEEN GHOSTS OF SCOOBY-DOO, and our special guest star in those episodes was Vincent Price. He was an absolutely delightful man. We tapped him to do the character of Vincent Van Ghoul, and he was just so delighted to be doing this cartoon show."

Semper had desperately wanted Price's autograph, but was unable to attend the recording session. Cynthia Friedlob met Price in the parking lot after the session and asked the Merchant of Menace if he could wait to meet Semper. "It took them about five or six minutes to find me," Semper recalls, "and Price stood out in the parking lot with Cynthia, talking. Never was impatient. Never was in a hurry. It was perfectly okay with him to wait until they found me so that I could get his autograph! He was just the sweetest man on the planet!"

The Sherlock Holmes influence can also be seen in one of SPIDER-MAN's larger than life villains. "The Kingpin's been the most prominent villain in the series, because he's such an evil force, in true Sherlock Holmes fashion. I literally made Kingpin



into a modern-day Professor Moriarty. He is the evil behind all the other evil. He is the mastermind of crime, and the most insidious thing about him is that nobody knows that he's out there doing it."

As fans know, only the baddies of Batman rival Spider-man's infamous rogues' gallery. As to which of these spider-slaying slimeballs will be seen on the series, Semper's happy answer is: "All of them! As many as we can cram into 65 episodes! Any villain that I don't feel can stand the weight of being up against Spider-man, and giving him a good fight, I'll usually make a secondary villain in a bigger story."

Among the adversaries who will appear in the series are Venom, Doctor Octopus, and the Vulture, the last a vengeful old man with the power of flight who was one of Spider-man's more unique heavies. The show, however, will present him as a young man. "They did that in the comics recently. Actually, I didn't want him to arrive on the scene as a young man, so we have the old Vulture and the young Vulture, and we have the transition between the two."

Semper had originally wanted to introduce the Green Goblin in the first season, but he was stuck with a decision that his predecessor (who left the show over creative differences) had made concerning yet another high-flying mischief-maker: the Hobgoblin. "Because he had made the decision to introduce the Hobgoblin first, there were certain designs implemented and a certain part of the production process initiated, which resulted in my being saddled with having to deal with the Hobgoblin. I could have regarded that as a negative, but I ended up regarding it as a positive. I'm very happy with the story; I think it's a great story. We have Mark Hamill (formerly the Joker on BATMAN) as the voice of the Hobgoblin."

Semper feels that introducing the Hobgoblin first leaves even more dramatic possibilities for the Green Goblin, who will be introduced further down the line. "He is going to be Norman Osborn, the original Goblin, but we're going to tell the story differently. It's going to give our show the kind of freshness that I want to give it, anyway. We don't want to tell any story

Christopher Daniel Barnes and John Semper (along with a certain web-slinging companion) give Scarlet Streeters the sticky fingers as the SPIDER-MAN cartoon show goes into production.





exactly as it was told in the comic books, because we want to keep everybody on their toes. We want to keep our audience guessing as to where we're going."

With all these evildoers showing up, it's a good thing SPIDER-MAN will have guest appearances by Marvel Comic's other superheroes. "Spidey always did lend himself to team-ups," Semper says, "and I have access to the entire Marvel universe. We'll be doing something with the Fantastic Four, and I'm definitely going to do something with Dr. Strange. We've done a crossover with the X-Men. We're going to do as much as we can without turning the show into SPIDER MAN AND HIS AMAZING FRIENDS."

As far as Peter Parker's personal life is concerned, Semper also has that covered. "We pick Peter up in his first year of college. Physically and visually, he's not going to change during the course of the series. But in terms of maturity, in terms of character development, I think we're going to have a little growing up. He's going to be a wiser person by the time this whole 65-episode miniseries is over.

"Every major Spider-man character that you can think of will turn up in one form or another in this series," Semper adds. "As far as the women are concerned, the Spider-man universe was never populated by strong women characters—at least, not in its early years. All the women in the show are extremely strong characters. That was one of my first mandates

"I wanted to make Peter's Aunt May a more interesting character, and not have her hovering in the background and making cookies and worrying about her heart. I wanted to make Mary Jane more sensible. She's still a lot of fun, but Mary Jane has a life, too. She has drama, she's not a bimbo. Felicia Hardy is

quite interesting. I'm starting her off as being a snooty, snooty, upper-class bitch, for lack of a better word. But she will grow. We have Glory Grant, who is J. Jonah Jameson's secretary. And I resurrected a very obscure character: Debra Whitman. Peter's a really brilliant science student, but Debra is also a brilliant science student; in fact, she may be more brilliant than Peter."

Gwen Stacey, however, remains dead. "I personally loved Gwen Stacey, but we did not want to do a character who, when you pick up a comic, is dead. Gwen was the woman I wanted Peter to marry—personally, as a fan. We decided not to do her, and most of the Gwen Stacey stuff was handed to Felicia."

Even J. Jonah Jameson, the Daily Bugle publisher who probably hates Spider-man more than any super villain, is being given a different spin on the series. "He's a man who was hurt early in his life, and he rather conservatively detests anybody who puts a mask on and becomes a vigilante," Semper relates. "He's still as much of a problem for Spider-man as he was in the comics, but in his private moments, we can understand why he does what he does. That makes him three-dimensional.

"We could get a thousand people to bang their fists and say, 'Parker! Get me those photographs!' But the minute we got Ed Asner to voice Jonah, we knew we had to have more for him to be than simply the guy who's on Peter Parker's back all the time."

The mention of Asner leads to the subject of the actors lending their voices to the animated screen. "We've got the greatest cast in the world," Semper

*Continued on page 52*



# Spidey's Man John Semper

interviewed by Jessie Lilley

**Scarlet Street:** SPIDER-MAN was originally scheduled for last fall. Why the delay?

**John Semper:** Well, it's a difficult property. We'd always intended to do the best job on this show that we could—we meaning Marvel Films Animation. There was never a feeling that the show should be rushed in any way, shape, or form. Before I got here, they ran into creative trouble. I think they had lost about six months, and they were anxious to get going as quickly as possible. We decided not to worry about getting on the air in September. The number one mandate was to make the show good.

**SS:** Spidey is famous for his inner monologues. Won't that make the show talky?

**JS:** Oh, we've already been accused of that! People are either going to love it because it's just like the comic, or it's going to drive them crazy. But, I want to bring the comic-book Spider-man to screen. Spider-man was born in comic books and he works best there. When you try to bring him to animation, you suddenly discover that things get strange. (Laughs) Things that are perfectly acceptable in the comic-book form are perfectly unacceptable in animation—the endless monologue, for one thing. Even though we're doing it, we can't do it exactly the way they do it in the comics, because it would drive everybody crazy. He simply talks too much!

**SS:** What have you done to overcome the problem?

**JS:** Well, we're really inventing a Spider-man storytelling language for animation. We're trying to fool the audience into thinking that it's just like the comic. In point of fact, if we literally did the comic book, everybody would hate the cartoon!

**SS:** Will the TV episodes be adapted from the comics?

**JS:** Some will. Stan Lee and the story editors after him rarely told a single story in one or two comics. It was really a rambling tale, a

convoluted story. I have to pluck elements out of those stories and make them into whole entities that last only one or two episodes. We are also linking them together with a kind of connective tissue that gives us, usually, a 13-episode arc.

**SS:** It must be tough trying to please everyone when you have so popular a character.

**JS:** Everybody thinks that they have the same idea of Peter Parker and Spider-man, but when you get them in a room they all have different ideas. Some people remember when he was a clumsy, gawky high school kid, some people remember when he was a real buff kind of college guy with a woman on every arm....

**SS:** Every arm?



Stan Lee and John Semper

**JS:** (Laughs) Well, you know, we just did the six-armed Spidey! I'm still in that mode. But, everybody has a different idea of who Spider-man really is, and it was very tough to zero in on what everybody wanted. I caught a lot of heat initially, because, once you pick a direction, two people are going to love it and three people are going to hate it.

**SS:** In the early days of the comic, Betty Brant was Peter's girlfriend.

**JS:** We have not yet used Betty Brant. She is Robbie Robertson's secretary. Will she be a romantic interest for Peter? No. I don't think we're going to do Betty as a romantic interest, because it's been so long since she's been one.

**SS:** Mary Jane Watson also went through many changes.

**JS:** Mary Jane was always a thinly-defined character. In the very beginning, she was an em-

barrassment, this sort of party girl who was only out for a good time. She went through her free-spirit phase, and then her slightly trampy phase, and now she's the dutiful wife and they're kind of a yuppie couple. I don't know who she is in the comic, to be honest with you. I know who she is in the show.

**SS:** One of the most important aspects of a cartoon series is the voice-over work.

**JS:** Our Spidey is Chris Barnes. He's perfect. I love him. And as soon as he learns how to stop raising controversial topics for discussion in public, I'm going to love him even more! (Laughs) He thinks nothing of standing in a group of people, and saying, "So what do you think about that abortion stuff, anyway?"

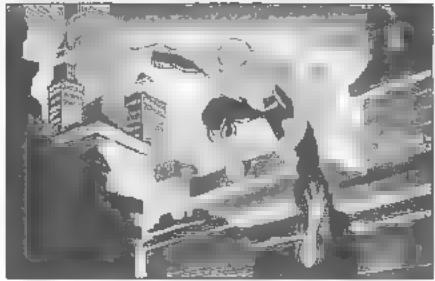
**SS:** BATMAN: THE ANIMATED SERIES wasn't allowed to put a vampire episode on the air.

**JS:** We've already done it. I am in the middle of expanding it, because it was so successful that we decided to stretch it for two more episodes. I have a good relationship with Broadcast Standards and Practices, in that I recognize that what they're trying to do is important, and philosophically I am not opposed to what they're trying to do. I think there were writers on

BATMAN who decided that they were going to wage war against Broadcast Standards and Practices. I think that's an unproductive attitude.

**SS:** Let's talk competition. BATMAN is considered one of the best of the new shows.

**JS:** I love BATMAN, but you can't watch a whole lot of it. I mean, there are only so many episodes you can watch before they all start to look alike, and part of it is that it's so completely drowned in that noir style. It's a little too much for me, a triumph of style over substance. If I have to compare them, the most important thing that we bring to animation—that BATMAN does not bring—is that our mouths are further down on the chins of all our characters. And I think that gives us all—a good night's sleep. (Laughs)



## From the Soap Box

# Stan Lee

interviewed by Michael Mallory

**Scarlet Street:** Are we going to see something new on SPIDER-MAN that we haven't seen in the comic books, the live-action TV show, the old cartoon series . . .?

**Stan Lee:** I think there might be a tremendous difference. I think the earlier cartoons were much more simplistic. These current cartoons have much more of the personality and the underlying humor and satire that we always tried to put into the Spider-man books. We're spending much more time on the dialogue, keeping it as sharp as possible. And virtually every story is based on a Spider-man comic, instead of, as in the past, just trying to make up original stories. I've always felt that, up until now, the cartoon versions haven't done him justice.

**SS:** It sounds like you're going for a more mature audience than is standard for Saturday mornings.

**SL:** We've never thought of it as comics for children or for older people. We write them to please

ourselves. I've always felt that, if I enjoy a story, then there are many people who have the same taste I do. We try to make our stories clear enough and exciting enough for younger viewers and younger readers of comics, and we try to make them intelligent enough and believable enough and satirical enough for the older viewer and the older reader. It's walking a thin line.

**SS:** Are you similarly involved with the MARVEL ACTION HOUR?

**SL:** Yes, exactly the same.

**SS:** And that features Iron Man . . .

**SL:** And the Fantastic Four. It will be a half-hour of each. In fact, I have an additional involvement there, because I'll be the host of the show. I'm going to introduce the shows live action for about a minute before they start, somewhat in the way Alfred Hitchcock introduced ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRESENTS and the way Rod Serling introduced THE TWILIGHT ZONE.

**SS:** So it will be kind of STAN LEE PRESENTS?

**SL:** In a way, I guess. I'm thinking of changing my last name to "Presents." (Laughs) "Lee" would be my middle name.

**SS:** When you were creating these comic-book characters, did you have any idea that you were creating American icons?

**SL:** None at all, not the slightest suspicion. In those days, we were just hoping we could come up with something our readers would like and that would be moderately successful. It's amazing the way it happened. They were all created in the early part of the '60s, and in those years it was as though we couldn't do anything wrong. Everything that we came up with has lasted until now; we are still among the bestselling comics in the world. When I think back on it, it's hard to believe. We've been really lucky.

### SPIDER-MAN STRIKES BACK!

*Continued from page 50*

enthuses. "It is a smorgasbord of people who I've always wanted to meet. To begin with, our director is Tony Pastor, and Tony's doing a wonderful job. Our Spider-man is Christopher Daniel Barnes—and he is perfect. He is a great actor. He is a good guy. I like him as a friend. As Mary Jane, we have Saratoga Ballantine. She is a wonderful actress, a very sweet person, and another good friend. We have Jennifer Hale, who does the voice of Felicia. We have an actor named Patrick Laborteau, who used to be on LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE, playing Flash Thompson, and he's doing a wonderful job. He captures that jock kind of arrogance. I mean, Flash is a real asshole."

The SPIDER-MAN cast also includes such stars as Maxwell Caulfield (Alistair Smythe), Roscoe Lee Browne (Kingpin), Efrem Zimbalist Jr. (Doc Ock), and Martin Landau (the Scorpion). Landau, in particular, left an impression on Semper.

"He showed me how he did Bela Lugosi in ED WOOD, so that was a treat. He said, 'You know, I had to learn how to use his muscles! Every muscle that I use that he didn't use I had to suppress. And every muscle that he uses that I don't use I had to learn how

to activate. When I get excited, my eyes get very wide, but when Lugosi would get excited, his eyes would get like little slits, like this.' And he did it!"

All in all, Semper doesn't find working on SPIDER-MAN to be overwhelming—"because it's variations on the same theme," he explains. However, that doesn't make the writing itself any easier.

"I want to publicly expose and destroy one myth about cartoon writing. Cartoon writing is harder to do than any live-action writing. Period. When you write animation, you have to be the cameraman and the editor. We still use the style that was made popular by Hanna Barbera years ago, which was that the script is the thing. All the shot breakdowns have to be in the script; you really have to have your entire cartoon in the script before you do anything else. So, it's a harder kind of writing, and it's frustrating because nobody realizes that. You don't get the kind of respect that you deserve."

"I want to bring the comic-book Spidey to the screen," Semper concludes. "That's the mandate. We're trying to do the best SPIDER MAN that we can do, and we want everybody to bear with us, because it's new and different and we are all growing with the experience of making a show. We mean well."



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# Better Holmes and Watson

## The Granada Series Reviewed

by Richard Valley

**THE MAN WITH THE TWISTED LIP**  
Adaptation: Alan Plater  
Direction: Patrick Lau

Jeremy Brett and Edward Hardwicke are once again in peak form, but it is Rosalie Williams who is given a rare moment to shine in **THE MAN WITH THE TWISTED LIP**, the fifth episode of **THE RETURN OF SHERLOCK HOLMES**.

Mrs. Isa Whitney (Patricia Garwood) has sought Dr. Watson's help in retrieving her husband (Terence Longdon) from a two-day orgy of opium smoking in Upper Swandam Lane. Watson, who has been left hanging by a Sherlock Holmes who has cavalierly "disappeared without trace"—something, the worthy physician tells us, that Mr. Holmes does "at regular intervals"—departs rather eagerly, leaving Mrs. Hudson (Williams) to commiserate with the distressed Mrs. Whitney.

"I sometimes wonder," says Mrs. Whitney, "whether men ever really

truly grow up. They seem to remain little boys forever. Do you wonder about that, Mrs. Hudson?"

"No, Mrs. Whitney, I don't wonder about that," smiles Mrs. Hudson. "I know it. And they always need us to kiss them better afterwards—in a manner of speaking, of course."

Granada rarely offers such warm insight into the character of Mrs. Hudson—or her relationship with her two celebrated boarders.

Arthur Conan Doyle's story (an early tale published in *The Strand Magazine* in 1891 and collected later in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*) concerns another troubled husband and wife: Mr. and Mrs. Neville St. Clair (well-played by Clive Francis and Eleanor David). Their family problem may be one of murder: Poor Mrs. St. Clair has seen her devoted husband "disappear without trace" from an upstairs window of the Bar of Gold, an opium den in—yes, you guessed it—Upper Swandam Lane. The prime suspect is a remarkably learned (and bedraggled)

**BELOW:** Dr. Watson (Edward Hardwicke) finds a heavily-disguised Sherlock Holmes (Jeremy Brett) in a smoke-filled opium den in Upper Swandam Lane. **NEXT PAGE:** Clive Francis had a field day in the "dual" role of Hugh Boone/Neville St. Clair. (Actually, it looks rather like he has half the field on his face!)



Jeremy Brett

beggar named Hugh Boone, the "man with the twisted lip."

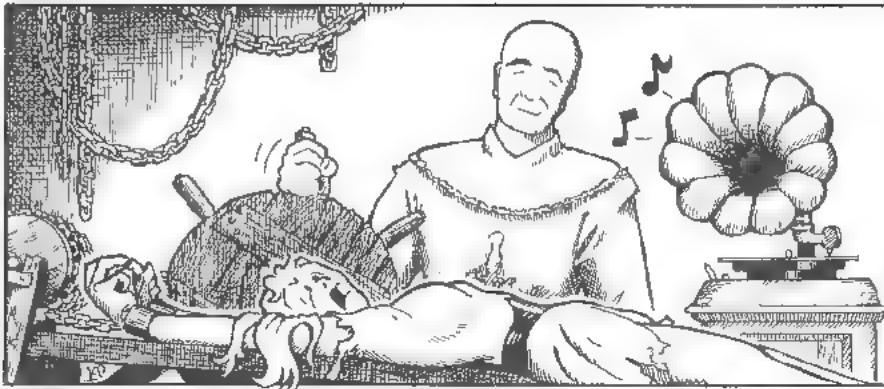
If Scarlet Streeters are unfamiliar with the solution to this puzzle, they are advised to read no further than the words "read no further"—for the answer lies in the fact that Neville St. Clair and Hugh Boone are one and the same person. Indeed, men are "little boys forever"—and it is not only Neville St. Clair, but the Master Sleuth himself, who indulges his childish predilection for playacting.

The episode also has something to say about relationships that may not be readily apparent to viewers. Though it's considered heresy in most circles to think of Holmes and Watson as a couple, or their association as a marriage, consider this: In **THE MAN WITH THE TWISTED LIP**, we are presented with three sets of people—Holmes and Watson, Mr. and Mrs. Whitney, Mr. and Mrs. St. Clair—who have very much in common. In every case, the "head of the household" vanishes. In every case, the motive for that disappearance is the individual's desire for adventure, for a life lived on a level above the ordinary—whether that means solving crimes, using drugs, or leading a double life. In every case, too, it is the remaining member of the household who is really the head, or more accurately the backbone, of the relationship.

Behind every man is a good woman, and behind every Great Detective, it seems, is a good doctor—in a manner of speaking, of course.







# Record Rack

## by Ross Care

### RECORD WRACKED

Ray Bradbury once described a recurring nightmare about being locked in a room with a typewriter and a copy of Melville's *Moby Dick*, and of not being allowed out until he had brought forth a screenplay. Recently I've been haunted by a similar nightmare involving Word-Perfect 6.1, a CD player, a bunch of current movie soundtracks, and of being denied access to any Bernard Herrmann or Alex North until having met a certain deadline!

But to starcrash in on a positive note, I retroactively nominate Tim Burton's *ED WOOD* for Best Picture and (forget the Supporting category) Martin Landau for Best Actor for his uncanny, beautifully controlled performance as Bela Lugosi. *ED WOOD* is a meticulous and loving recreation of the life, times, and Zeitgeist of the once obscure filmmaker who no longer needs any introduction in either cult or mainstream circles. Better yet, it's also an appealing, constantly surprising, often moving, sometimes harrowing, but ultimately feel-good movie that never bores you.

It also provides two firsts for Burton: a cohesive, compassionately human screenplay, and a non-Danny Elfman score. The Burton/Elfman schism was reportedly occasioned by a conflict over credits for *NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS*: Due to his extensive (some might say overextended) contribution of words and music to *NIGHTMARE*, Elfman allegedly wanted story credit on the film as well. When none was forthcoming, fade to End Title. Enter Howard Shore, the Canadian-born composer best known for his David Cronenberg scores (1986's *THE FLY*, 1988's *DEAD RINGERS*, 1991's *NAKED LUNCH*), as well as for such blockbusters as *THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS* (1991) and *PHILADELPHIA* (1993).

Shore's *ED WOOD* score (Hollywood Records, HR-62002-2, 44:00) is a glitzy pastiche of period styles, the shoestring stock library sound of Wood's original pictures, and movingly earnest underscoring for the ever-optimistic Eddie and his bittersweet relationship with the washed-up, drugged out Lugosi. Though the ubiquitous London Symphony is credited, the score has a scaled-down sound that sometimes suggests Dominic Frontiere's music for TV's *THE OUTER LIMITS*, particularly in its "Main Title." Throughout these appropriately modest arrangements, bongos and a theremin stand out as '50s-ish signifiers of the hip, the weird, and the outré. (Shore even managed to find a real theremin for the score.)

At one point, Burton briefly uses the distinctive Latin sound of Prez Prado (unheard in films since Anita Ekberg flounced her way through the Baths of Caracalla in 1960's *LA DOLCE VITA*) to further evoke Hollywood and its fringes. In the Lugosi cues, another homage is heard, the poignant theme from Tchaikovsky's ballet *SWAN LAKE*, which served as the "Main Title" for the otherwise sparsely-scored 1931 *DRACULA*.

A fine overall sense of period, as well as on-the-mark cues inspired by the no-budget sound of Wood's original soundtracks, make for a consistently interesting and memorable score.

In a *Film Score Monthly* interview, Shore paid tribute to the period and the overall high quality of the film music of the 1950s by commenting: "The '50s in this particular period is wonderful for music. Jazz and be-bop were becoming popular, great Latin music was being played, film score music was interesting. Even the library music used in those Ed Wood movies was interesting. GLEN OR GLENDA

used library music, but it's of such a vintage, it's wonderful in its own sort of strange way. Those [cues in *ED WOOD*] were just my version of that music."

Several underscored monologues by Criswell (Jeffrey Jones) and Lugosi (Landau) add to the authentic Wood mood. What next for Tim Burton? How about *THE BARRY BROWN/ALLISON HAYES STORY*? And Johnny Depp would be a natural as the young Desi Arnaz in *BABALU*!

Though I didn't see *WES CRAVEN'S NEW NIGHTMARE* (my old ones will do, thanks), I enjoyed J. Peter Robinson's atmospheric, dreamlike score for the seventh film in the *ELM STREET* series. The Milan CD (73138 35690-2, 58:05) also has an original format: The many cues, which have such great titles as "The Glove Goes Berserk" and "The Claw in Heather's Bed," are arranged in seven uninterrupted suites to make for cohesive listening. The 50-year-old British-born Robinson, who was a rock musician with Phil Collins and Eric Clapton, but who also studied at the Royal Academy of Music, fuses HALLOWEEN-like Synclavier hits with real orchestral sounds. The result is a relatively fresh and varied spin on the expected suspense rifts. Charles Bernstein's "Freddy" theme is integrated into the score at various points.

Back in the period vein is *RADIOLAND MURDERS* (MCA MCAD 11159, 64:00). Though the score is credited to Joel McNeely, best-known for TV's *YOUNG INDIANA JONES*, most of the CD is given over to remakes of standards, from 1933's outrageous "A Guy What Takes His Time" (from *SHE DONE HIM WRONG*, and for which Paramount's star composer of the era, Ralph Rainger, did both words and music) through "Tico Tico" and "Back In The Saddle Again."

The arrangements exhibit the somewhat sterile sound that contemporary swing transcriptions seem to have, but the always reliable Rosemary Clooney adds a welcome note of authenticity with a seductive "That Old Feeling." Although it's fun, just whom this heady, synthetic mix of Gene Autry, the Boswell Sisters, and Mozart (the "Queen of the Night" aria?) might appeal to—other than rabid fans of Brian Benben, who will be dreaming on about a movie career after his film debut here—is difficult to gauge. Spike Jones enthusiasts may, however, be intrigued by the special participation of—no, not Sir Frederick Gas, but the durable Billy ("I'm in the Mood For Love") Barty, who livens up the proceedings with an amusing Jones homage to the tune of "That Old Black Magic."

#### THE AGE OF GENERICUS

The past film season was strong on big-budget genre offerings, even if most of the films themselves proved somewhat weak. CDs have been released from most, including *INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE*, *MARY SHELLEY'S FRANKENSTEIN*, *THE JUNGLE BOOK*, and *STAR TREK GENERATIONS*. All push the right buttons and catch the right sync, all sound like they were performed by the London Symphony Orchestra, and all are pretty much interchangeable.

I must admit to having become almost totally Retro in my moviegoing/soundtracking habits, but that also means I can come to these scores with relatively fresh ears.

As film scoring invented itself in the classical Hollywood period from the early 1930s on, it evolved along a strange and eclectic trajectory of Euro/American and 19th/20th century styles and influences which, like the moons of Jupiter that gave birth to the Star Child in 2001, will probably never align in quite the same manner again.

The roots of modern Golden Age scoring can be traced to the same Russian and French origins of certain key 20th-century concert music: from such late 19th century Russian colorists as Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov to the atmospheric, highly accessible early 20th-century French Impressionism of Debussy and Ravel. These latter influenced the Americanization of film music in the 1950s, when composers such as Alex North, Elmer

Bernstein, and Hugo Friedhofer, under the influence of Copland, David Diamond, Ned Rorem, and other American composers who were themselves heavily indebted to the modern French/Russian school (Ravel, Prokofiev/Stravinsky), shook off the heavy Germanic sound of Korngold and Steiner. The end result, which reached the highest level ever achieved in film composition, refreshingly fused personal style with an innovative, less-is-more scoring both epic and intimate (and often influenced by jazz and other Pop idioms).

On the other hand, the major influence on '80s and '90s film music seems to date back no further than 1977 and *STAR WARS*. If John Williams (with a lot of help from Holst, Korngold, et al) ef-



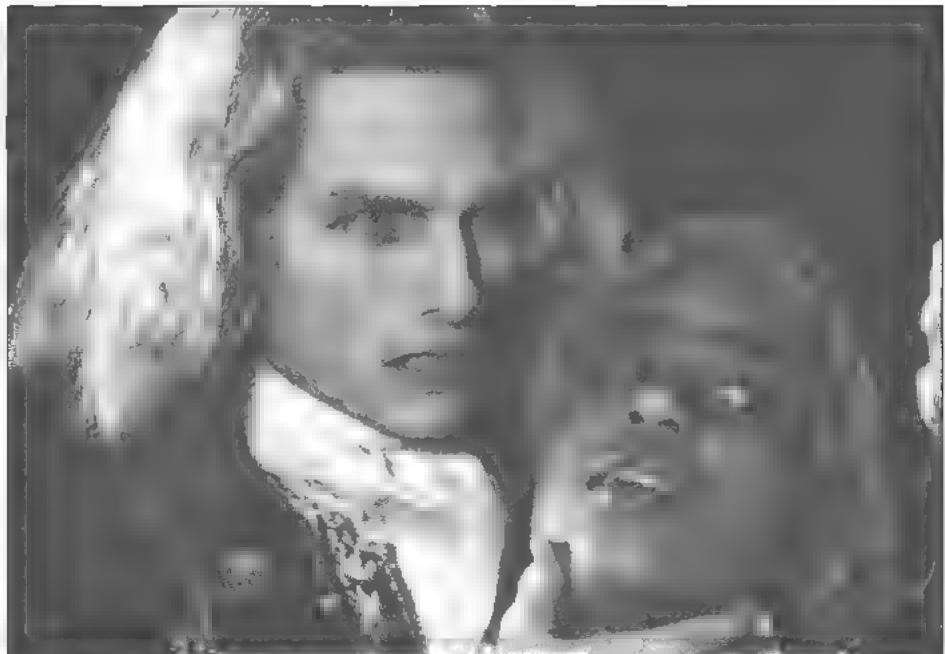
Johnny Depp as Ed Wood

fected a welcome return to the stirring symphonic mode that had been nearly obliterated by the late '60s craze for Pop-dominated scores, he also put the kiss of generic death on the kind of scoring that peaked in the twilight of Golden Age Hollywood. Most of the genre scores that have followed have been fairly slavish copies of what has become the *de rigueur* *STAR WARS/INDIANA JONES* symphonic mode.

Even Jerry Goldsmith, probably the last real musical genius to emerge from the Hollywood system, and one of the few working links to it, succumbed (and contributed) to the "generic age" with an often-imitated mode established in his appealing but lesser scores for *GREMLINS* (1984), *EXPLORERS* (1985), and *MATINEE* (1993); this in light of the fact, however, that Goldsmith also created some of the most striking and original genre music ever. His innovative scores for such films as *PLANET OF THE APES* (1968), *THE OMEN* (1976), and *ALIEN* (1979) influenced ensuing sci-fi and horror scoring in a much more positive and progressive (if less pervasive) manner than did the hyper-derivative *STAR WARS*. But generally speaking, from *STAR WARS* to *STARGATE* (1994), there's been little in mainstream commercial film scoring to rival that of the Golden Age of the '50s and early '60s.

Modern vampire movies have supplied a rich and varied source of cinematic musical inspiration, from James Bernard's massed brass screaming "Dra-cu-la" in 1958's *HORROR OF DRACULA* to the hypnotic "Within You, Without You" drones of Popol Vuh's unexpectedly Raga-ish score for Herzog's 1979 remake of *NOSFERATU*. Elliot Goldenthal has composed a brooding, intermittently interesting score for the latest airing of the durable Undead, the well-publicized and ultimately well-received *INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE* (Geffen GEFD-24719, 49:00). The mode here is symphonic, fairly conventional structurally and harmonically, but with some Goldenthal-cum-Goldsmith "vampire as alien" modernisms, as well as some subtle but atmospheric electronic and period embellishments—two violin soloists, viola de Gamba, harpsichord, and glass harmonica—tossed in for good measure. Somehow it all meshes.

The ambient mood swings between somber lyricism (a moody "Main Theme," and a melancholy waltz for piano solo, both of which evoke the appropriately Anne-Ricean feel of Old World *welt-schmerz* and more agitated *sturm und drang* passages. Violin solos intermittently conjure up that Transylvanian mood as well, but at times (as towards the end of "Claudia's Allegro Agitato") they also veer perilously close to suck-



**Tom Cruise gets his revenge on Oprah Winfrey, who stormed out of a screening of last fall's INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE.**

ing the score into the New Age vortex of Philip Glass' "Main Title" for 1985's *MISHIMA*. (A brief attack of "temptrackitis," perhaps?) All in all, *INTERVIEW* is an effective, elegiac, somewhat predictable score, but it's still probably the best of the recent lot. Be warned, however: The CD (like the movie) concludes with Guns 'n' Roses' inept, boring parody of the Rolling Stones' "Sympathy For the Devil." Couldn't they afford the reuse fees for the original?

**MARY SHELLEY'S FRANKENSTEIN** (Epic Soundtrax, EK66631, 69:54) is, alas, also Kenneth Branagh's *FRANKENSTEIN*. Branagh's direction of the film seems to have been inspired by the trailer for *IN HARM'S WAY* (1965), in which Otto Preminger heatedly admonishes Barbara Bouchet to "Keep running, Barbara!" (Our man Ken doubtless added: "And get real hysterical!") Scottish-born Patrick Doyle has been Branagh's musical alter ego since the well-received *HENRY V* (1989), but his *FRANKENSTEIN* score is perhaps the least inspired of the recent spate of genre outings. There's a formal, 19th-century feel to the structure and harmonies, which evokes a kind of bloodless gentility, and which alternates with the obligatory Gothic effects, the mix finally engendering little more than monotony. (What both film and score ultimately triggered in me was an intense desire to rewatch James Whale's

*BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN*, in which Franz Waxman's music exhibited more emotion, technique, originality, and ironic humor in 1935 than most of these recent scores put together.)

Dennis McCarthy's score for *STAR TREK GENERATIONS* (Crescendo, CNPD 8040, 60:45), is the latest product of the deathless *STAR TREK* industry. Though in the now-mandatory symphonic mode of the two previous scores, *GENERATIONS* is basically TV music—TV music on a grand scale, but still essentially (even quintessentially) TV. It's not a bad score, but it goes nowhere you haven't been before a lot! Of course, die-hard Trekkies probably wouldn't want it any other way. The liner notes read like PR hype and are especially nausea-inducing. ("Dennis brings it all to a close with 'To Live Forever,' where Data, having found his lost cat Spot, cries tears of joy.")

Basil Poledouris composed the score for one of the more unnecessary remakes of the year, *RUDYARD KIPLING'S THE JUNGLE BOOK* (Milan 7313B 35711-2, 48:00). One of the more interesting musicians to work the mainstreams of the current Hollywood jungle, Poledouris manages to generate some surprisingly pleasing and dynamic scores within the circumscribed limits of '90s genericism, and *JUNGLE BOOK* is a duly entertaining score, replete with an upliftingly

lyrical "Main Theme" and some intriguing (if not wildly adventurous) orchestral effects.

Probably the most vivid end result of my transient plunge into the generic world of Film Music '95 is an overwhelming sense of *déjà vu*. It's like well even though I see very few current films, I had the nagging feeling that I'd somehow already heard all these scores before. There was also an overall impression of "one size fits all" interchangeability: For four films that in the past might have elicited four radically different modes of scoring, now you could take any cue from any score and graft it onto any remotely appropriate scene in any film—and it would probably work. ("Baloo Chases Lestat and Frankenstein into the Nexus Jungle Treasure Room.") It's amazing that genre scoring, which once offered composers unprecedented opportunities for far out experimentation (for example, Dimitri Tiomkin's 1951 score for *THE THING*), has become so conservative.

Given the time and space, one could profitably cite Jameson and Adorno in attempting to explain why film music and popular culture in general have become as boring as a Big Mac. Or perhaps one should cite Karl Marx: Popular culture has simply become capitalistic fodder. Even movie bombs end up paying for themselves on video, and just passable film scores can garner a few extra bucks via the rarefied but rabid soundtrack market.

At the dawn of the soundtrack age, only the best, most distinctive scores were released commercially; now, every film seems to spawn the obligatory soundtrack. (Hey, are CDs for *LEPRECHAUN*, *DR. GIGGLES*, and *HONEY I BLEW UP THE KIDS* really necessary?) To boot, digital technology imposes at least 20-something or more tracks and 40 to 70 minutes per disk, which makes for a pretty long haul with music originally intended as an adjunct to visual imagery and narrative. And despite the length of many soundtrack CDs, current film scoring seems to have become a kind of watered-down classical music for those who lack the time, inclination, and/or attention span to sample the real thing, but who still crave orchestral sound and some kind of emotional rush with-

in a tonal, not-too extreme or complex "easy listening" context.

But even orchestration has also become routine, and is a crucial element in the generification of new scores. Typically, what is basically a standard 19th-century orchestral ensemble rambles doggedly along, whether it be evoking Moon 44, Lestat's Paris, or Anytown, U.S.A. Any experimentation with solos or evocative, small ensemble scoring seems verboten. The very title of THE JUNGLE BOOK, for example, suggests exotic percussion and offbeat sounds, but you hear very little of either. Whatever happened to Herrmann's axiom that, since a score is only played once (for recording), you might as well use any combination of instruments that you can imagine? (He certainly did.) Ultimately, for all the attention I gave these last four CDs, I found it difficult to tell the scores apart, let alone the seemingly endless and indistinguishable succession of cues that made up each one. There seemed to be only two modes operative in them: dramatic/epic (i.e., the clashing/docking/warping of starships) and benign/inspirational (everything else).

Via letter, a composer (a commercially successful, trend-setting musician of the late studio era) speculated to me that the end of the studio system, combined with the simultaneous emergence of the director and/or independent producer as creative controller,



© Vegahorn Europe N.V.  
Jason Scott Lee stars as Mowgli in Walt Disney's second—but first live-action—production of THE JUNGLE BOOK.

signaled the eventual decline of significant film scoring.

The blame cannot be placed solely with the composers (all of whom are technically competent). Perhaps contemporary directors don't want too much emotion or personal style; perhaps audiences and listeners don't, either. Or maybe it's the impossible schedules and assembly line production methods of the current Hollywood product. At any rate, while researching a future article on 1950s film music, I came across a quote from a giant of film scoring, who commented that one of the advantages of working in Golden

Age Hollywood was that composers no longer had to write "neutral music" (in contrast to, say, '30s scoring). None of the new scores are terribly bad; they are not terribly anything, really—least of all terribly memorable.

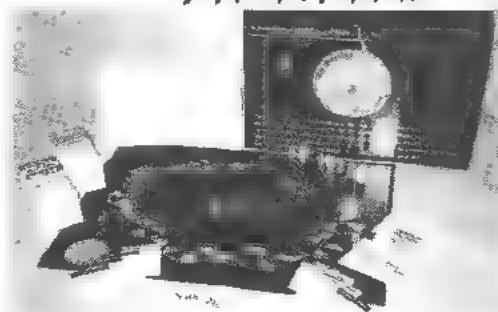
So, to paraphrase the great Criswell, "past events will affect you in the future"—and it seems in the '90s that the (terribly neutral) pendulum has swung back with a vengeance.

Ross Care is currently working on two articles on Hollywood music in the 1950s for a book to be published by the Library of Congress.

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# HOW TO MAKE A MONSTER MOVIE

## HERMAN COHEN

interviewed by Jessie Lilley

Last issue, *Scarlet Street* spoke with the delightful, always entertaining producer Herman Cohen about his innovative teen horror films of the fright-filled '50s: *I WAS A TEEN-AGE WEREWOLF* (1957), *I WAS A TEENAGE FRANKENSTEIN* (1957), *BLOOD OF DRACULA* (1957), and the aptly-titled *HOW TO MAKE A MONSTER* (1958).

When Cohen switched from black-and-white fright flicks to full color with 1959's *HORRORS OF THE BLACK MUSEUM*, the concept of a teen terror was not entirely abandoned—although the high-school set now had to play second fiddle to Britisher Michael Gough, who, in addition to taking the lead in *BLACK MUSEUM*, headlined Cohen's *KONGA* (1961) and *BLACK ZOO* (1963).

In turn, Gough surrendered the star spot to the legendary Joan Crawford, ending up just another victim in the Pepsi Queen starrer's *BERSERK* (1968) and *TROG* (1970).

Here, in the second installment of a fascinating three-part interview, *Scarlet Street* publisher Jessie Lilley investigates the "colorful" career of the one and only Herman Cohen . . .



We always knew that Michael Gough was a man with a wicked tongue in his head, but in *HORRORS OF THE BLACK MUSEUM* (1959) he put a wicked tong in Beatrice Varley's head as well.

**Herman Cohen:** *HORRORS OF THE BLACK MUSEUM* was my first picture in color.

**Jessie Lilley:** It has a reputation for being more sadistic than most other films of the period.

**HC:** Every murder was based on an actual murder that occurred in the United Kingdom, including the one with the binoculars. The binoculars was quite a case; it took place just before World War II, in the '30s. A stableboy was madly in love with the mistress of a very wealthy family in Windsor. The father caught them out in the stables having sex, and the boy was fired and thrown off the property. A year later, just prior to Ascot opening up, these binoculars were sent through the post of the Marleybone Post Office. She was murdered by focusing the binoculars and looking in them.

**JL:** She got the spikes in her eyes. Was it the stableboy's intention to kill the girl or the father?

**HC:** The binoculars were sent to her. She'd refused to have anything further to do with him.

**JL:** A roll in the hay and it's over!

**HC:** Every case was true, even the portable guillotine. They were all based on the files of Scotland Yard's Black Museum. I changed the circumstances. The characters. But we wrote the screenplay based on the actual tools and instruments of murder that were used.

**JL:** *HORRORS OF THE BLACK MUSEUM* was quite a hit, wasn't it?

**HC:** We had a big opening in New York. We opened up at a hundred theaters—a big, big opening—and I flew in with the binoculars. Ruth Pologe, the publicity gal I hired for *BLACK MUSEUM*—she suggested I report that I lost the binoculars at the airport. Which I did. Which I reported to security. The police arrived, and we received the front page on two of the tabloids in New York—the Post and the News, I think. I can't remember his name, but one of the assistant DAs had a feeling that it was all a gimmick. He called and wanted to talk to me, because he was going to try to prove that it was a publicity gimmick, which had cost the city a lot of money.

**JL:** Did they get you?

**HC:** Not at all. I'm a pretty good actor. (Laughs)

**JL:** Any other stories about *HORRORS OF THE BLACK MUSEUM*?

**HC:** There's one funny thing that happened in London. We wanted to use Scotland Yard. Believe it or not, Scotland Yard in those days had no signs. I had something to do with the Scotland Yard signs that you see now, because there were no signs on Scotland Yard. There were just big black gates. For my American audience, I wanted people to know where they were, so we had a sign made at the studio. We put it up on the gates and paid off a couple of bobbies who opened and closed the gates, and we filmed our scene. About four weeks later, we wanted to shoot an insert of the sign, so I called our prop department to bring the sign over to the stage. They said, "My God, we left the sign on the building!" So my associate producer, Jack Greenwood, and I drove to Scotland Yard at about one or two in the morning and stole back our sign! (Laughs)



JL: Wonderful! In the '60s, Michael Gough took over what was essentially the Whit Bissell role in your films.

HC: I really loved Vincent Price, but we couldn't afford him. So Michael Gough inherited the roles I had written originally for Price.

JL: What's the story behind the HypnoVista prologue in *HORRORS OF THE BLACK MUSEUM*?

HC: Oh, that was AIP. I had nothing to do with it. Jim Nicholson was looking for some gimmick, because this was a big picture in Cinema-Scope and color. At that time, Bill Castle was coming up with all kinds of gimmicks for *THE TINGLER* and this and that. It was working for Columbia, where Bill Castle was releasing his pictures, so Jim thought we should have a gimmick with *HORRORS OF THE BLACK MUSEUM*. He called and said he'd met this hypnotist at USC, and he wanted to put together a six-minute prologue for the film. We put it in at the beginning of the picture, only in the USA. We didn't use it when the picture played on TV, by the way—and when we sell it to video, I don't know whether we're going to use it or not.

JL: Let's talk about apes. Giant monster movies are not what we usually expect from Herman Cohen, although, as you said, you've made so many different films....

HC: I wrote *KONGA* because I needed another picture that was going to make a lot of money, a picture I thought was going to do well. *KING KONG* was such a classic; I figured it was time to do an-

other *KING KONG*. When I told Jim Nicholson about my idea, he said, "Hey, I think it would work." And Aben Kandel and I did the script. I wanted to use *KING KONG* in my advertising, so I met with the legal department of RKO and made a deal. I paid them \$25,000 to allow us to refer to *KING KONG* in our advertising. "Not since King Kong!" That's how I got the name; it was Kong and we added an "a" to it.

JL: *KONGA* had a lot of special effects. Was it an expensive film to make?

HC: That was something I was very proud of. At the time, the studios were using the blue matte process. There was a brilliant technician in London working for Rank Labs. His name was Victor Marguetti. There was nothing about film he didn't know. He came up with the process of using yellow sodium lights instead of the blue matte, so that you don't see the blue line around the figures and it doesn't shake, which I used to hate. If you watch *KONGA*, you don't see any of that. It's rock steady.

JL: Marvelous.

HC: Sodium lights—which took a great deal of time, because it was trial and error. We had to shoot it, we had to process it, we had to see if it worked. If it didn't, we did it again. I was a stickler for things. It had to be done right. Jim Nicholson and AIP kept saying, "Hurry! We want to release the picture!" I said, "Look, we're still working on the effects." They couldn't comprehend what it entailed. I talked to Carl Foreman, who was getting ready to do *THE GUNS OF NAVARONE*, and he used Marguetti for the same sodium light effects on *GUNS OF NAVARONE*. We did a lot of special effects for *KONGA*. It was quite tough, because we had to use ingenuity in place of money. *KONGA*, complete with everything, cost just around \$700,000.

JL: That's incredible!

HC: We only had to pay the lab for the time that we used. And for the film. You didn't pay for the film that didn't work, not in those days. Some of the scenes were incredible. In the finale, we had Konga standing next to Parliament and Big Ben. The police and the army have come out to see what they can do to shoot him dead. Well, we couldn't shoot at Big Ben, of

course, but we needed a street that had stores like it. There's a suburb of London called Croydon; they had a main street that looks exactly like the stores across from Parliament and the Embankment. So we tried to make a deal to shoot there, but the metropolitan police and city council of Croydon were dragging their butts. My British counterpart, Jack Greenwood, said, "Herm, there's no way we can shoot on the streets there." So I went to meet the inspector, and we sat and talked. They say the British bobby is the most honest cop in the world. I was warned when I went to England not to try to give a British bobby any money. That's a lot of crock! We were talking; I told him I wanted to use the streets for five days and we would start after one in the morning, after the pubs closed. He was discussing his wife and how they'd just moved into a new house, and how he wished he could afford a color TV set. (Laughs) Well, to make a long story short, he received a present from my production company, and he talked the city council of Croydon into giving me the permits!

JL: Hot stuff!

HC: So then we're shooting. The last shot was the army with bazookas, with machine guns, with rockets going off. That was the last shot on the street, but I did not tell the inspector what we were going to do—because we'd never have gotten permission. The plan was one take, then everybody in the trucks and out! And I can only tell you that the emergency number is 999 in London, and they received hundreds of calls. (Laughs) People thought they were being attacked!

JL: Well, it wasn't too many years after the blitz.

HC: And they thought they were being attacked! The next day, the inspector had a long list of people who had complained. So my production manager and I bought boxes of candy and flowers and went personally to those homes to explain what happened. We gave them candy so they wouldn't complain to the government and I wouldn't get thrown out of England! (Laughs) Anything for the film!

JL: Anything at all, right?

HC: We used a lot of ingenuity in place of money in those days!

JL: *BLACK ZOO* had a whole menagerie of animals.

HC: We shot *BLACK ZOO* at Raleigh Studios, where my offices are.

JL: Right, so animals often do manage?

HC: Yes, of course. We had 23 wild cats, lions, tigers, we had a black panther. We got some great shots of them on the set, sitting on the couches, on the chairs. I own the Fox Theater, and I had the world premiere at the Fox. I flew in with the lion, Zamba, and the tiger, Katrina, who was beautiful. I made a deal with American Airlines, and I flew with them to Detroit, to the world premiere at my Fox Theater. I checked them into the Statler Hilton with me. (Laughs)

JL: Oh, no!

HC: Oh, yeah. We got great coverage. Then we went to New York. I was staying at the Hampshire House, but we checked the lion and tiger into the Edison Hotel, and I took 'em with me to TV interviews and personal appearances. I had what

have you. But you were talking about shooting the picture. We only had one incident. Zamba jumped on one of the trainers. You see, each cat had a specific trainer that they grew up with, and they loved their trainer. In fact, when you see a lion or tiger attack somebody in a BLACK ZOO or any picture, it's usually the trainer in costume, portraying the actor or actress. What they're doing is wrestling with the cat and playing with them. We put 'em in the zoos afterwards, because they're playing, they're happy. Anyway, in this case, it was a young kid they sent for Zamba. It was not the trainer that he grew up with. I was standing there on the stage talking on the phone as they were bringing him, and Zamba

jumped the trainer, and had 70 stitches in his arm.

JL: Good God!

HC: We got the car from a place called Nature's Haven in Saugus, run by Ralph Holter. I love animals and for some reason the animals look to me. I've got stills of me next to Zamba. Now, Zamba, if he'd turned his head toward me and I had my arms around him, he could have killed me. I was foolish! I was a big schmuck! You know, anything for publicity! (Laughs) We also had the mountain lion escape from the stage. He got under the sound stage, where our electrical wires go. He squeezed underneath. However, we didn't know where





PAGE 62: Herman Cohen, Jess Conrad, Claire Gordon, and KONGA. By this point in Cohen's oeuvre, teenagers had pretty much stopped being monsters and become victims of the older generation. PREVIOUS PAGE: The big ape makes a monkey out of his enemies in KONGA (1961). TOP: Cohen regular Michael Gough is up to no good in KONGA, much to the distress of Margo Johns. Johns played the older woman who is inevitably doomed in a Cohen presentation. MIDDLE: It's never too wise to turn down the love-crazed Michael Gough. Here, Claire Gordon makes the mistake of doing so in KONGA. BOTTOM: Always a good sport, Gough shows Claire Gordon that there are no hard feelings over his spurned advances—by giving the girl a fur coat!

he was! Just a block from the studio there's a school, so we had to notify the L.A.P.D. and they sent a chopper over, and they kept all the kids in school for lunch. My publicist at that time, Ted Bonnet, said "We gotta call the papers! Call Associated Press! This is great publicity!" Once again, I was accused by the DA of doing it as a stunt! But this time, unlike the situation with the binoculars, it was not a stunt! The lion actually escaped! (Laughs) We found him finally, cowering underneath the sound stages, scared stiff.

JL: *Oh, poor thing!*

HC: It took hours to find him, by the way. Stopped production. Stopped everything. We got great headline stories, though. In fact, I have the paper right here in my office. (Laughs) It's on the wall.

JL: *How did your star, Michael Gough, feel about working with lions and tigers?*

HC: Michael Gough was marvelous. The animals took to him like they took to me. He wasn't afraid of them, and they sensed he wasn't afraid. I brought Michael from London to do the film; we did the film here in Hollywood. He said to me, "Gee whiz! You never told me I was gonna have these lions and tigers trying to sit on me!" (Laughs) BLACK ZOO was quite an exciting film, especially to see how they trained the cats, how everyone loved these cats. It got to a point one day, the cats were sitting on the side getting ready to go in for a shot, and the prop man walked by and kicked the cat to make it move over. I said, "Max! That is a lion! That is not a pussy cat!" I had to talk to the crew, because they got so used to the cats on the stage that they forgot that they were wild cats.

JL: *How did you become associated with Joan Crawford?*

HC: With Joan? Aben and I wrote a story. I wanted to do a circus horror film; I always loved the circus. We wrote BERSERK. Now, the lead originally was going to be played by a man. The lead that Joan Crawford played was going to be a man when we were first writing the treatment.

JL: *Why did you change it?*

HC: Well, I've always loved Joan Crawford. Joan and Bette Davis did WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO BABY JANE? here at the studio, and I got to know both of them. They used to come to my office—not together, believe me! (Laughs) Joan would raise hell about Bette, and then Bette would schlep in with her old terry-cloth robe and her cigarette dangling, to ask if that bitch Joan had been around—and if I had anything to drink! (Laughs) I almost signed Bette for a couple of pictures, but it didn't work out. In fact, before I signed Dame Edith Evans for CROOKS AND CORONETS, I was talking to Margaret Rutherford in London, and then I thought of Bette Davis for the part. At the time of BERSERK I was signed by Columbia Pictures, and Joan was a very close friend of Columbia's president, Leo Jaffe. I mentioned the circus picture to Leo, and I said, "I'd love to have a meeting with Joan Crawford. I'm willing to fly to New York." She was living in New York. He said, "I'd be very happy to ask her, Herman." And she was happy to meet with me. I went up to her magnificent penthouse flat at Two East 79th. See, I'm not going senile. I remember these things . . .

JL: *Now, now . . . I never said you were senile.*

HC: I was talking to myself. (Laughs) Anyway, I met with her, and I gave her the script to read. She liked it. She wanted to work; more than anything, Joan wanted to work. That's why I got her for those two pictures that were not the kind of pictures, between you and me, that a Joan Crawford should have been offered. May I say at the same time that so much of Mommie Dearest was a lot of crap, because I knew her daughter and family. Joan and I were very close for the last 10 years of her life.

JL: *One reads so much about her drinking problems. Were there any problems when you worked together?*

*Continued on page 66*

# KONGAKOMIX

by Buddy Scalera

Comic books and movies have long had a symbiotic relationship. Many motion pictures are based on comics and even more films have been translated onto the pages of sequential art.

Herman Cohen was an early experimenter with comic books as promotional tools. Even though he had not read comics as a kid, Cohen recognized that they could be valuable to him.

When KONGA stalked the screen in 1961, Cohen had the savvy to release promotional items to children, including statuettes and comics. "When we did KONGA, we were looking for anything that might go with it," says Cohen. "I can't remember the deal, but I don't think we got paid. It was just a promotion to release the comic book, so that the theater could give them away if they wanted to."

Cohen admits that he never took much interest in the 1961 comic adaptation of KONGA published by Charlton Comics. "I think I browsed through it once fast," Cohen says of his first comic. Rather, he was busying himself with producing the films loved by horror buffs.

Ironically, other than the original adaptation, Cohen was unaware of the Konga-related spin-off published by the same company. Konga the comic took on a life of its own—as did adaptations of two other giant-monster movies of the period, Gorgo (based on the 1961 King Bros. film) and Reptilicus (based on the 1962 Sid Pink production).

Konga the comic enjoyed modest success at best. However, in recent years, Konga titles have become sought by collectors. The reason: Steve Ditko, the legendary talent who illustrated the book.

Ditko is best known as the creator (with Stan Lee) of Spider-Man, and as one of the artists on whom Marvel Comics built their mighty marching foundation. Yet, his roots trace directly back to the terror-filled pages of such comics as *Unusual Tales* and *Strange Suspense Stories*. During his early years in comics, Ditko made a name for himself at Charlton as a top-notch fantasy and horror artist. His ability to capture expressions of terror and surprise were just a small portion of his tremendous talent.

Konga lasted for 15 issues between the years 1960 and 1965, with most of the art by Ditko and much of the writing by Joe Gill. In 1962, Charlton tried to ride the wave of Konga's success with *The Return of Konga* (which bore no issue number on the cover). The *Return of Konga* series was replaced in 1963 with the short-lived *Konga's Revenge*, which lasted only three issues—even though it was given a head start by beginning with issue #2!

Konga stories were reprinted at least three times, probably due to Ditko's popularity. In 1966, *Fantastic Giants* #24 reprinted the origins of Konga

and Gorgo. This rare issue sometimes confuses collectors seeking other *Fantastic Giants* issues, because the series started and ended with issue #24.

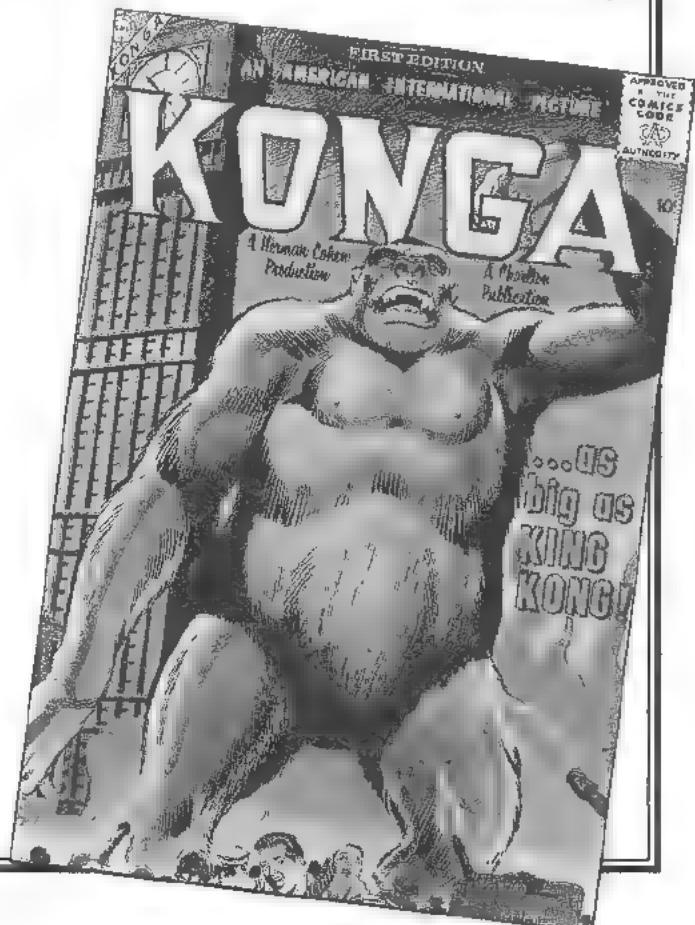
Several Konga stories were reprinted in *The Lonely One* (1981) by Robin Snyder. The black-and-white paperback featured several well-composed tales by Ditko and Gill.

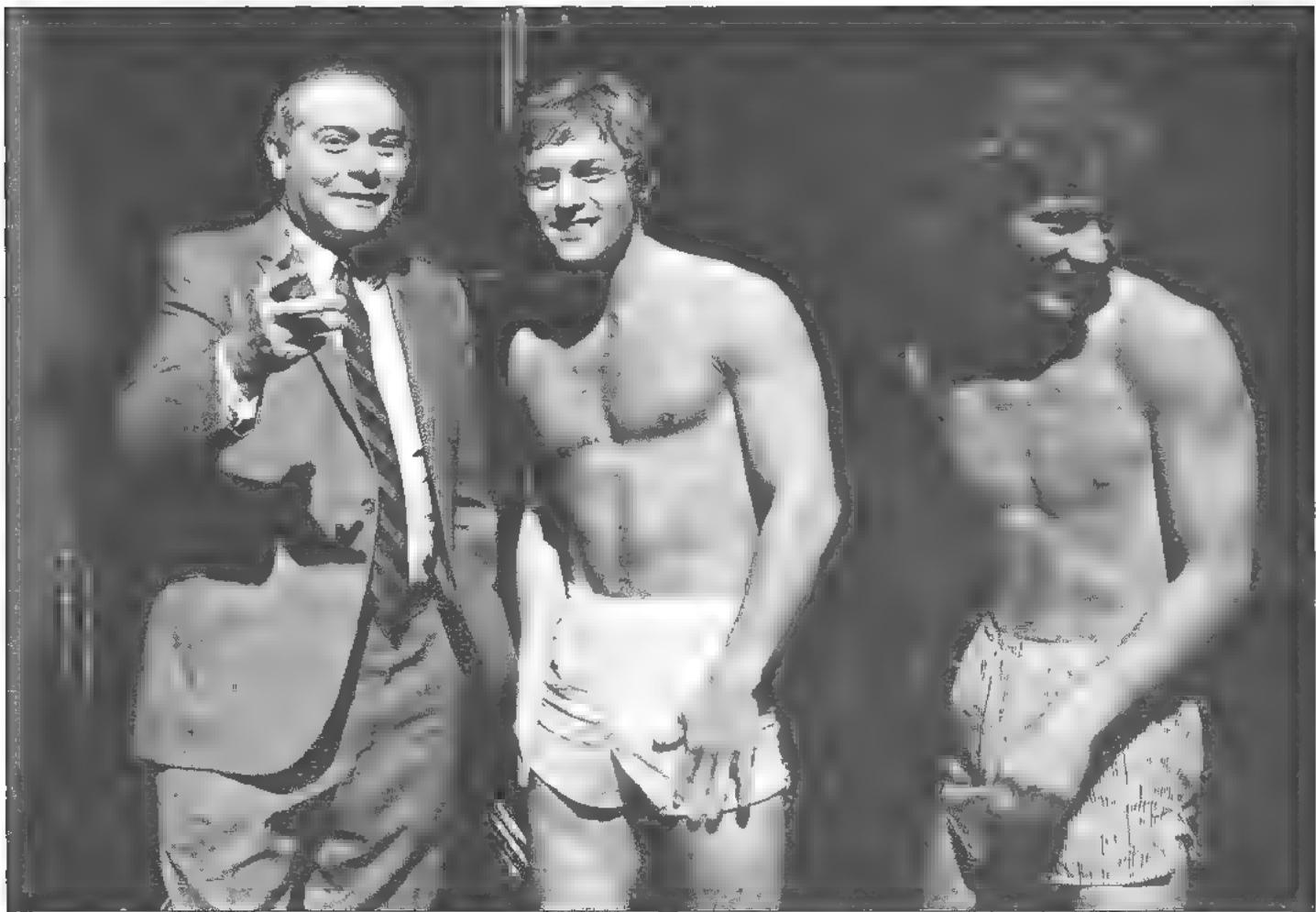
Besides Ditko, Charlton nurtured several major comics names, talents including *Batman* writer/editor Denny O'Neil, *Flash* artist Dick Giordano, *Batman* artist Jim Aparo, and *Superman* artist John Byrne. Despite the well of talent, Charlton eventually shriveled and died.

Steve Ditko continues to create comics today, though he has not worked on many high-profile projects in recent years. He is known in the industry as a private man, one who shuns publicity.

Herman Cohen, though he was never a comic-book fan, admits that he would have liked to have seen his movies *HORRORS OF THE BLACK MUSEUM*, *BERSERK*, and *TROG* adapted into comic-book form.

Comic and movie fans owe a debt of gratitude to Steve Ditko and Herman Cohen, whose pioneering work helped lay the foundation for so many contemporary artists and directors.





Herman Cohen tells John Hamill (fresh from playing Cowboy in the London production of THE BOYS IN THE BAND) and Geoffrey Case that the budget for TROG (1970) doesn't include an allotment for costumes.

#### HERMAN COHEN

*Continued from page 64*

HC: There was a drinking problem at the time we did BERSERK and TROG. She would drink 100 proof vodka straight, in a coated glass that said Pepsi-Cola on the side. (Laughs) However, we made a deal that she not take her first drink until I gave her the okay. You had to be tough with a gal like Joan. If you were tough, she'd listen. She'd respect you. She knew she had a producer. I coddled her, too. She would call me up at three in the morning when she was sloshed and going over the script for the next day. She'd call and say, "Herm! You got the script with you?" Like that's who I'm sleeping with, you know? (Laughs) "Got the script?" "Yes, Joan." "Turn it to page 47 for tomorrow ...."

JL: Oh, boy!

HC: However, I must tell you: She always knew her lines. She was never late. She was the first one there. She would make breakfast for her hairdresser, the wardrobe

gal, the two English prop boys, whom she liked very much. She'd worked with them on THE STORY OF ESTHER COSTELLO, years before in England. She was very faithful to the crew. She was really a great gal. My father would go to Florida for the winter, and she'd have a Pepsi truck come once a week and drop off two cases of Pepsi to give to his friends.

JL: Sounds like an incredible woman.

HC: She was disciplined, but she was more disciplined with herself than anyone else. I have a marvelous story. When we were in London, she gave a dinner party for Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton. I was with her. John Scott, who scored A STUDY IN TERROR, was there. Joan told me that, for the evening, she was wearing no jewelry. I said, "Why?" She said "You think I can compete with goddamn Liz? She's going to wear the goddamn family jewels!" So she gave the dinner, and she had a few drinks. We started with caviar—the Shah of Iran was a good

friend of Joan's and would ship her caviar—and Liz Taylor wanted some more. So Liz turned to the waiter and said, "I want some more caviar and blini." And Joan said, "Wait a minute! How dare you! I'm the hostess of this dinner party! If you want anything more, you ask me!" "Oh, I'm sorry, Joan! I'm sorry! I would like some more." "Well, there isn't any more! We've got a big meal coming!" (Laughs) Oh, I have many stories about Joan. Both pictures I did with her came in under budget, under schedule. Tough as the budgets were, I assigned a Rolls-Royce and a chauffeur to her—because in London she was still a big star. In fact, Columbia Pictures had a beautiful flat at the Grosvenor House, which they gave us for Joan. When she arrived to do the film, she had 28 suitcases and four cases of 100 proof vodka. She said, "Herm, I'm not charging the production for this, because it would cost you a fortune for the plane. Pepsi will pay for it." She



LEFT: Herman Cohen produced two movies starring the Queen of Pepsi herself: Joan Crawford! RIGHT: Cohen poses with Ty Hardin, Joan Crawford, and Judy Geeson, the stars of *BERSERK* (1968).

had two Pepsi trucks waiting for us at Heathrow to take all her stuff to the flat! (Laughs)

JL: Were any script changes made to accommodate Crawford?

HC: We wrote changes every day.

JL: Every day?

HC: On every picture I've ever done. A script's not written in cement. If an actor or actress or anybody's having trouble with a line, or if it doesn't smell right, we change it. I'm a floor producer; if I'm in the office, they call me when

they're ready to do a shot. If there are any problems, I'm there. Joan would come to me about various things, and we'd sit and talk about it. If she was having difficulty with something, or anyone on the picture, we'd do something.

JL: In addition to the circus film *BERSERK*, weren't you involved on *CIRCUS OF HORRORS*?

HC: Well, I was behind the scenes on that picture. It was produced by Julian Wintle. However, Nat Cohen owned a lot of *CIRCUS OF*

*HORRORS*, and he had me as sort of a consultant. I also owned a piece of *CIRCUS OF HORRORS*. I had always wanted to do a circus horror film, and *CIRCUS OF HORRORS* was a big hit—but not as big as *BERSERK*.

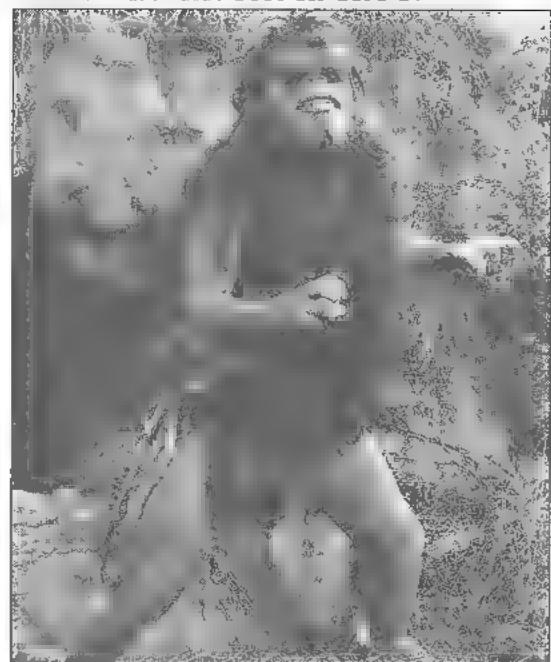
JL: On *BERSERK*, how did Joan Crawford get along with her costars?

HC: Operator? Operator, are you there?

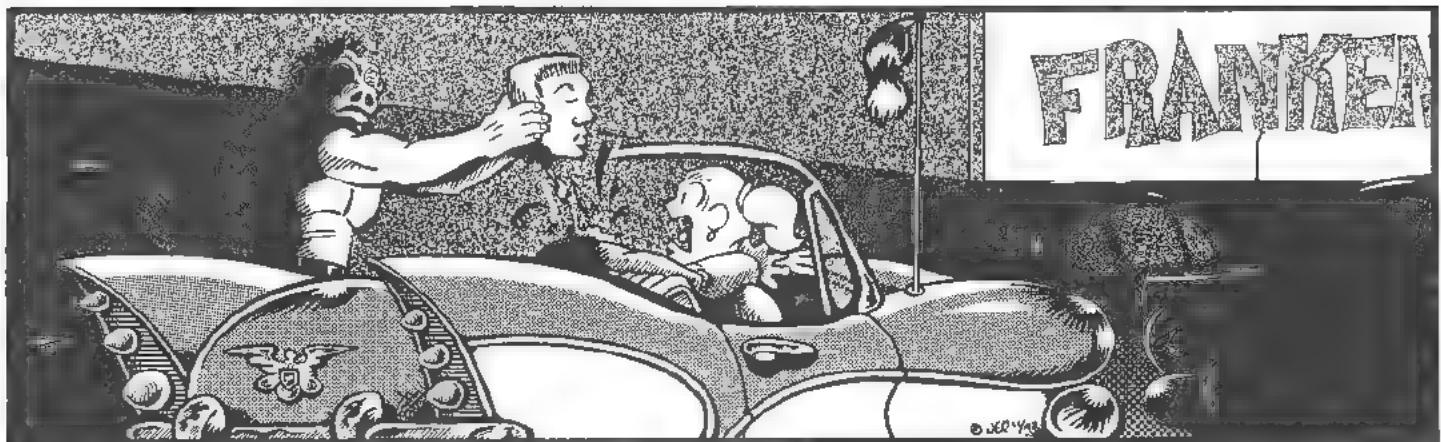
JL: (Laughs) That bad, huh?

*Continued on page 105*

LEFT: Joan Crawford matched wits with Michael Gough in Herman Cohen's *BERSERK* (1968) and *TROG* (1970). Gough met a grisly end in both pictures. RIGHT: Jerry Cornelius had the title role in *TROG*.



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# BLACK ZOO

by John Brunas

Herman Cohen built a lucrative career in horror films by following that old Hollywood adage, "If it worked once, it'll work again." The producer's pet formula—the enslavement of an innocent by a superior intellect—was utilized to one degree or another in no less than seven movies between 1957 and 1963.

Cohen first introduced the theme in American International Pictures' box-office smash *I WAS A TEENAGE WEREWOLF* (1957), a drive-in classic that helped put the fledgling releasing company on the map. In his role as a psychologist conducting unorthodox experiments in human regression, Whit Bissell was the prototype of the Cohen villain: smug, supremely self-assured, possessing the charm of a snake-oil salesman, but most of all, dedicated to the fulfillment of his obsession at any cost, least of all human life. As the volatile teen who came to Bissell for psychiatric counseling, Michael Landon was the ideal dupe (and the quintessential Cohen victim): childlike, naively trusting, doomed from the moment he fell within Bissell's grasp.

Predictably, Cohen/AIP issued a followup to their hit, the similarly plotted but considerably inferior *I WAS A TEENAGE FRANKENSTEIN* (1957). As a descendant of the original Dr. Frankenstein, Bissell was called upon to do a reprise of his "no sacrifice is too great for science" shtick, creating from the littered corpses of dead teens a human pastiche (played by Gary Conway) that he could control.

Bearing an even closer kinship to *TEENAGE WEREWOLF* was *BLOOD OF DRACULA* (released in 1957

to give bottom-of-the-bill support to *TEENAGE FRANKENSTEIN*); this time, it's a female researcher (Louise Lewis) who makes life hell for her charge (Sandra Harrison). In *HOW TO MAKE A MONSTER* (1958), two struggling young actors (Gary Clarke and Gary Conway) are hypnotized by an embittered movie makeup artist (Robert H. Harris) and sent out to murder the new heads of the studio, who had given

the old-timer the pink slip. *HORRORS OF THE BLACK MUSEUM* (1959) starred former Shakespearean player Michael Gough, in his first of five pictures for Herman Cohen, as a demented crime writer, who, with the assistance of his callow young assistant (Graham Curnow), devises a series of hideous crimes. Gough's slave in *KONGA* (1961) represented a backward leap down the evolutionary ladder: a murderous ape, scientifically metamorphosed from a chimp Gough (as a crazed botanist) brought back from the jungles of Africa.

In *BLACK ZOO* (1963), Gough's first American film, the actor had at his disposal a



Zoo stole our heart away? Virginia Grey, Herman Cohen, Jeanne Cooper, and Michael Gough on the set of *BLACK ZOO* (1963)

whole menagerie of jungle beasts to do his bidding. As usual, Gough pulls no punches: His portrayal of wild animal cultist Michael Conrad is stamped with his own particular brand of malice. His performances in *HORRORS OF THE BLACK MUSEUM*, *KONGA*, and *BLACK ZOO* fondly recall the days when such horror greats as Lionel Atwill and George Zucco seized these madman roles by the throat and, with great relish, drained every last drop of venom from them.

As the film begins, Mary Hogan (Warene Ott), a young secretary, is attacked and brutally slain by a

Siberian tiger lurking in the shadows of a dark Los Angeles street. The somber mood shifts gears to one of lighthearted fun as a tour bus disembarks at the gateway to Conrad's Animal Kingdom, a popular suburban attraction. The proprietor, Michael Conrad, takes great pride in introducing the gleeful throng to the various members of his "family," including Caesar, a lion from Somaliland; Baron, a Siberian tiger; a black panther; and an ape. The tour winds up at the monkey house, where Conrad's wife Edna (Jeanne Cooper), a former circus star, entertains the visitors with her chimp act. (Look for Cohen himself—doing an "Alfred Hitchcock"—seated in the audience.)

We soon learn that Conrad's conviviality is but a facade: He is in reality a cold, domineering man who treats his charges like royalty and his human family like animals. He dismisses Edna's affections with a sneer and admonishes her for hitting the bottle. But the target of most of his brutality is his lonely young assistant Carl (Rod Lauren), who is mute.

Conrad is repeatedly pressured to sell his property by Jeffrey Stengel (Jerome Cowan), a high-pressure real estate developer who wants to build a community on the zoo's site. When Conrad dismisses his lucrative deal, Stengel gets down-and-dirty: If the zoomaster doesn't accept his offer, Stengel will use his influence to zone off the land as a residential district. Pretending to cooperate, Conrad arrives at Stengel's home that evening to sign the contracts. But he is not alone. At the madman's command, King, an African lion, appears and tears Stengel to shreds. Back home, Conrad regales his "children," who lounge comfortably on chairs and sofas, with organ music, and repeats his vow to protect them from their human enemies.

Conrad's dedication to his brood knows no bounds. When Joe (Elisha Cook Jr.), an attendant, spitefully shoots the tiger Baron to death for mauling him, an enraged Conrad orders Carl to feed Joe to one of the lions. Following a bizarre funeral ceremony, in which the other jungle beasts form the cortege, Conrad attends a meeting of the True Believers, a cult that worships wild animals. Their leader, Radu (Oren Curtis), presents Conrad with a tiger cub and

leads his followers in prayer so that the soul of Baron will enter the body of the cub and be reborn.

Fed up with Conrad's neglect and his inhumane treatment of Carl, Edna accepts an offer to sign up with a traveling circus at the urging of her agent and longtime friend, Jenny Brooks (Virginia Grey). Unbeknownst to both women, Conrad has overheard the conversation. That night, as Jenny pulls her car into the garage, she is beaten to death by an ape hiding in the shadows. Distraught over Jenny's murder, Edna coaxes an admission from Carl that he had driven Conrad and the ape to Jenny's home the night before. The pair quickly pack their belongings and rush out into a raging storm. Before they can make good their escape, however, they are stopped by the mad zookeeper. Overcome with rage, Conrad beats Edna mercilessly, and orders Carl to lock her in the lion's cage. When he refuses, Conrad spitefully reveals that the young man is his son. This revelation triggers a memory locked in Carl's subconscious, in which he witnessed his mother being mauled to death by a lioness upon Conrad's order. The traumatic incident cost the boy his voice. Regaining his composure, Carl overcomes Conrad and, in a vicious struggle, strangles him. The zookeeper's beloved "children" stand helplessly by, unable to come to his rescue.

One of the perverse pleasures derived from *BLACK ZOO* (and such other megalomaniac serial-killer shockers as 1960's *CIRCUS OF HORRORS*, 1971's *THE ABOMINABLE DR. PHIBES*, 1972's *DR. PHIBES RISES AGAIN*, 1973's *THEATER OF BLOOD*, and Cohen's own *HOW TO MAKE A MONSTER* and *HORRORS OF THE BLACK MUSEUM*) is anticipating the gruesome fates in store for the unsuspecting principals. Once the twisted logic of the killer has been established, it remains for us to just sit back and keep track of the body count. Getting caught up in the mean-spirited nature of the whole thing is inevitable: We can't wait to see who's going to be impaled on that pair of sinister-looking ice tongs or clawed to death by that irritable lion. It's all good, clean, nasty fun.

*BLACK ZOO* marked Herman Cohen's return to Hollywood after a successful stint in England. Having

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**LEFT:** Filmdom's favorite victim, Elisha Cook Jr., once again finds himself in a nasty pickle when he meets **BLACK ZOO** proprietor Michael Gough. **RIGHT:** The Cook is goosed.

developed a script (based on his own idea) with frequent collaborator Aben Kandel, Cohen secured the services of Ralph Helfer, who owned Nature's Haven, an animal training ranch out in the San Fernando Valley near Saugus. Helfer's revolutionary method of taming wild animals, called "emotional training," was based on not stern discipline, but TLC. The Kandel/Cohen script contained several instances in which a variety of wild cats, all natural-born enemies, interact with the human cast members and each other. During the film's promotional tour, Herman Cohen appeared with several of his feline thespians on Johnny Carson's *TONIGHT SHOW* in New York and made personal appearances at the premieres of *BLACK ZOO* in New York and Detroit.

Aside from the master/slave subtext, *BLACK ZOO* has other key elements we've come to expect from a Cohen production. In terms of characterization, only the villain displays ingenuity and craftiness; virtually all of the secondary characters are either victims, unwilling accomplices, or baffled onlookers.

Once again, the authorities come in for a drubbing. Long after it has been clearly established that the first two victims were killed by animals, the police captain (played by Ed Platt, the immortal Chief of TV's *GET SMART*) and his subordinates are back to square one in their investigation when ape hairs are discovered on the body of a third corpse.

Again, Cohen employs a wildly improbable plot, delivered in a straight-faced manner, without a shred of satire. This no-nonsense tone serves the film well in its dramatic passages, but undermines the effectiveness of several of *BLACK ZOO*'s more bizarre moments. Had such surreal tableaux as the funeral for the slain Baron, Gough's organ recital in the presence of his feline flock, and the hilariously absurd True Believers ceremony (complete with a wide-eyed guru sporting a tiger headpiece), been directed in a less reverential, more tongue-in-cheek style, it might have offset the derisive chuckles these scenes now elicit.

*Continued on page 101*

**LEFT:** Wife Edna (Jeanne Cooper) tells zoo-master Michael Conrad (Michael Gough) that she's going back into show biz. **RIGHT:** Shortly thereafter, Edna's agent (Virginia Grey) meets a mini-Konga.



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## An Open Letter from

**Sara Karloff, Ron Chaney, and Bela Lugosi, Jr.**

We, the families of Lon Chaney Sr. and Jr., Boris Karloff, and Bela Lugosi, want to thank the fans, collectors, and manufacturers of memorabilia and collectable items for their continued interest and support of our ancestors. We recognize that their popularity remains high due to you, their fans.

It has recently come to our attention that there is a misperception concerning our attitudes towards licensing, and that some people are apprehensive about approaching us for licenses. Please be assured that each of the families welcomes the opportunity to license any legitimate and appropriate use of our ancestors' likenesses. We are anxious to work with all licensees in a way that enables their products to be both successful and profitable for them.

Our licensing concerns are twofold. Our first is that the likeness be used in an appropriate and tasteful way. Our second concern is with unlicensed products. The only way the families can see that a standard of excellence and good taste is maintained is through licensing and artwork/product approval. Often, the endorsement of the family helps in the marketing and sales of a product, so it becomes a win/win situation for everyone.

Let me once again assure the fans and manufacturers that it is our wish to help in whatever way possible to perpetuate the memories of Lon Chaney Sr. and Jr., Boris Karloff, and Bela Lugosi and to honor their contribution to cinema history.

Sincerely,  
Sara Karloff

Please direct all inquiries to:

Ron Chaney, P.O. Box 1775, Cathedral City, CA 92235  
Sara Karloff, P.O. Box 2424, Rancho Mirage, CA 92270  
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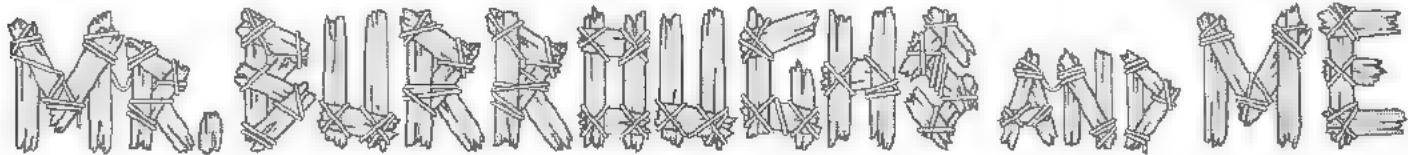
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Richard A. Lupoff is a self-described mass-culture maven. For decades, he has been a devotee of motion pictures, popular fiction, jazz, blues, classic cars, old time radio, and comics.

In addition to the popular Hobart Lindsey/Marvia Plum series (including *The Comic Book Killer*, *The Classic Car Killer*, *The Bessie Blue Killer*, and *The Cover Girl Killer*), he is the author of more than 20 novels and nearly 100 short stories. His very first book, *Edgar Rice Burroughs: Master of Adventure* (1965), is regarded as the standard work on the career of the creator of Tarzan of the Apes, John Carter of Mars, and the world of Pellucidar.

In the 1960s, Lupoff edited a series of Burroughs reprints and first editions for Canaveral Press. The following article (featuring classic illustrations from Burroughs books) consists of his reminiscences of Canaveral, coupled with a promotion article that originally appeared in the pages of *Castle of Frankenstein*.



## by Richard A. Lupoff

When I was a schoolboy and a science fiction fan—I'm talking about the mid to late 1940s—I kept coming across the name Edgar Rice Burroughs. The letter columns of the professional magazines and the fanzines included frequent mention of him, along with demands from readers for more of his stories. Such were not to be had. Burroughs was a war correspondent in the Pacific until his health failed, following which he was largely inactive for the remaining years of his life. There were a few late novels—*Tarzan and the Foreign Legion* (1947), *Llana of Gathal* (1948)—but these were minor Burroughs, certainly of interest to completists and collectors, but far from his best or even his average output.

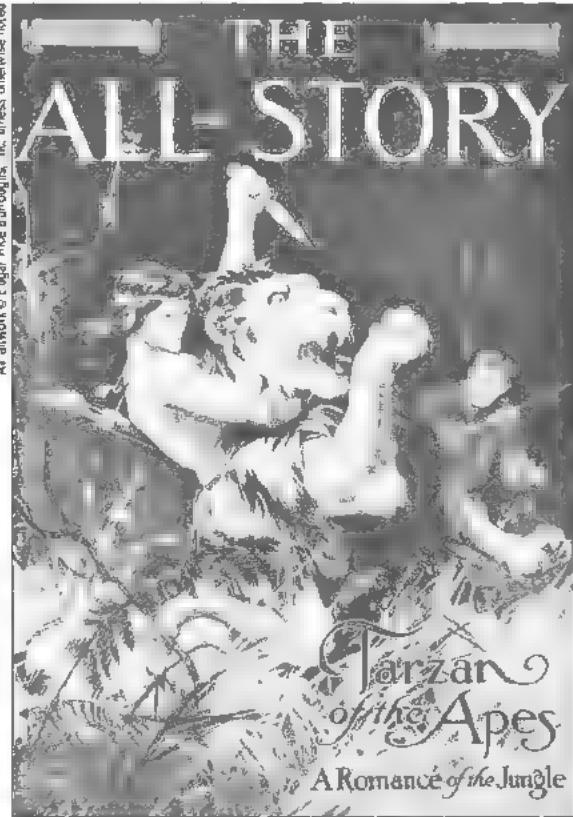
To me, Burroughs was connected with Tarzan, not with science-fiction. And even Tarzan had to do with mainly low-budget movies that featured an overweight Johnny Weissmuller, a so cute you-could-puke chimp named Cheetah, and the same three or four stock shots of African wildlife year after year. Comic books didn't interest me very much, I loved the comics as a medium, but the crudely drawn Dell version of Tarzan was not to my taste. Big Little Books I didn't often bother with; I was already into the pulps.

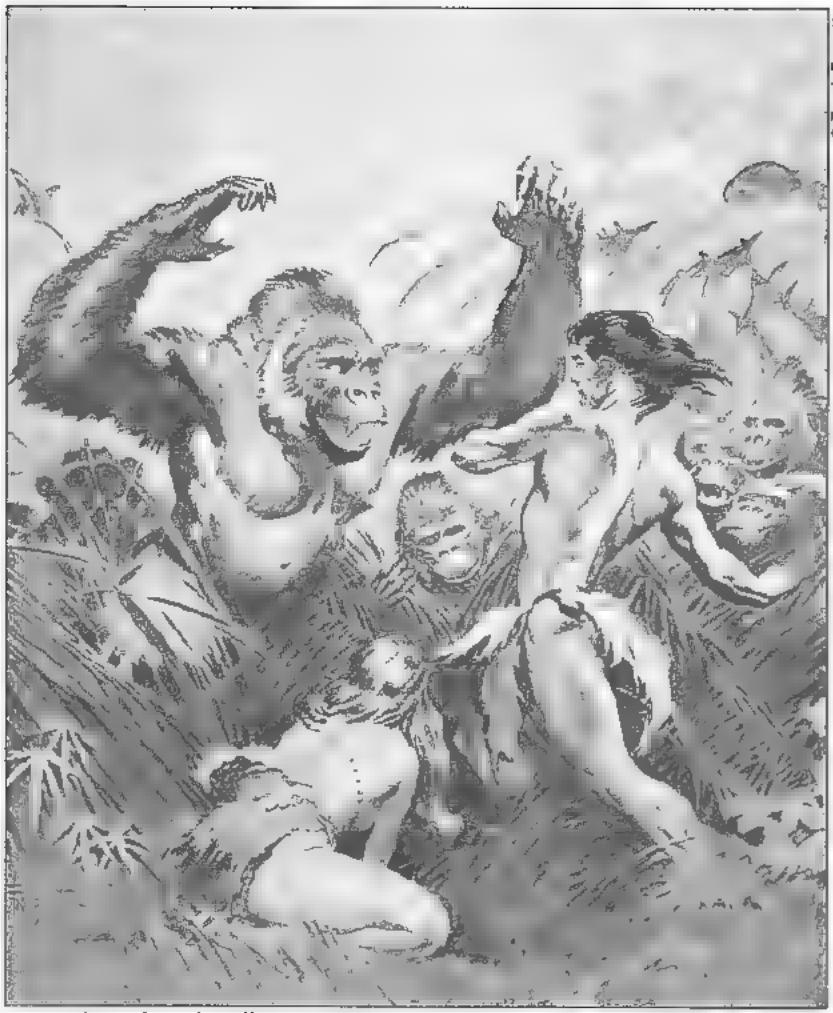
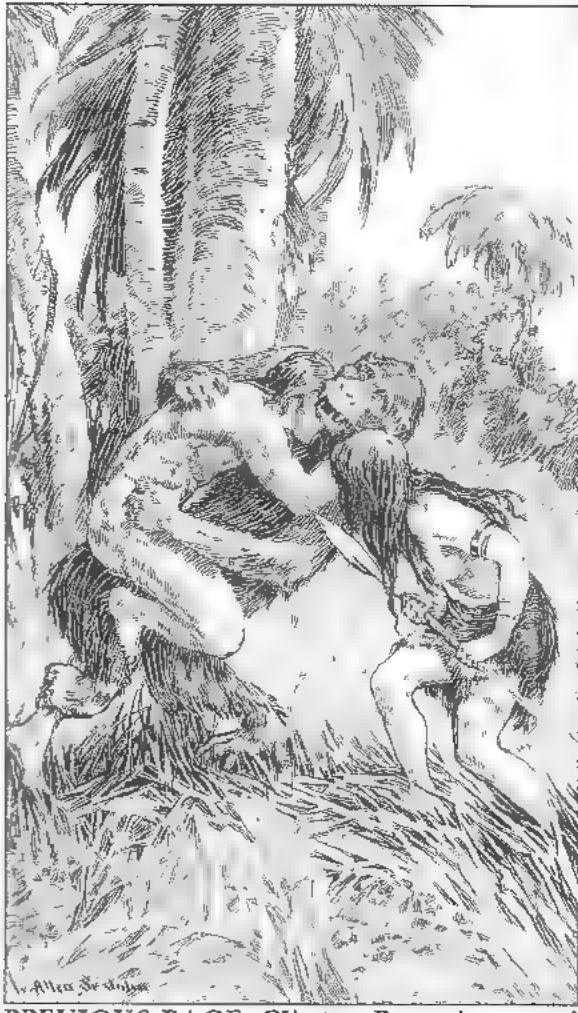
And then one afternoon I had an epiphany. My dictionary defines an epiphany as "a usually sudden manifestation or perception of the essential nature of something." There are several other definitions, but that's the one that applies to my experience.

It was a perfect afternoon late in spring of the year. Probably in the month of May. I can't tell you the year—1945? '46? '47? The sky was china blue; puffy white clouds drifted overhead. I sat on a splintery old bench beneath a willow tree that sighed—it did not weep in the breeze. On a nearby tennis court, players practiced their game. The pock-pause-pock of the ball colliding with racket made a pleasant, rhythmic background sound.

This all took place in the small town in New Jersey where I was attending school. A local resident kept a row of hen-houses behind his home, and the same breeze that pushed those pretty clouds along and that made the willow sigh, also carried the distinctive odor of chicken droppings to my youthful nostrils. Unpleasant, but part of the memory nonetheless.

I had come across a Big Little Book edition of *Tarzan and the Ant Men* (1924), and out of curiosity I made an exception to my prac-





© Frank Frazetta

PREVIOUS PAGE: Clinton Pettee's cover illustration for the first published Tarzan story. LEFT: J. Allen St. John's frontispiece for *The Son of Tarzan* (McClurg, 1917). RIGHT: Frank Frazetta's masterful cover painting for the 1963 Ace Books reprint of *The Son of Tarzan*.

tice of ignoring Big Little Books. I read *Tarzan and the Ant Men* and I experienced a "sudden manifestation or perception of the nature of something." The "something" was the appeal of Burroughs. For this Tarzan was not the flabby, inarticulate character I knew from the screen, nor was the story the childish pastiche that I had read in the comics. This Tarzan was an intelligent, noble adventurer, a real hero. And the story was full of wonders—tiny people, size-changing, immortality, marvelous cities shaped like beehives lighted and ventilated by wonderful candles that burned carbon dioxide and emitted oxygen.

Edgar Rice Burroughs died in 1950, and I never did get to read one of his science-fiction stories—in that era.

A decade and more passed. I went to college, then into the army. After I completed my military service, I began a career in the then-fledgling computer industry. I was married and started a family. I still read science-fiction and kept up some contacts in the fan community, but Burroughs was far from my mind.

Then in the early 1960s, Burroughs books began to appear once more. These were reissues, of course. There had been no Burroughs in the book shops for many years, except for some old and thoroughly unattractive Grosset & Dunlap Tarzan reprints. But the new books that were appearing, from a company called Canaveral Press, were real science-fiction,

with fascinating titles: *At the Earth's Core* (1922), *The Moon Maid* (1926), *A Fighting Man of Mars* (1931). They were illustrated by a strange artist named Mahlon Blaine, whose drawings were weird and erotic.

I was buying my science-fiction in those days from Stephen Takacs, a dealer with a little shop on Second Avenue in New York City. Steve was a good-looking, beefy man with a shock of wavy gray hair and a lugubrious manner. Business was always terrible, he was forever on the ragged edge of bankruptcy, his favorite expression was not a word at all but a moan of despair.

When I read the first Canaveral editions, I became wildly excited. These books weren't the kind of science-fiction I was accustomed to reading in *Galaxy*. They weren't quite like anything I could recall reading. There was an intensity of color and excitement to them, a feeling of freedom from the bonds of everyday reality and the drabness of here-and-now.

Instead of dressing in a three-piece suit, riding the subway to sit in a huge office building grinding out technical documentation to accompany programming packages for the Univac 80/90 or the IBM 1401, I was riding across the wind-swept plains of Barsoom on the back of my faithful six-legged thoat, dressed only in warrior's leather harness, sword in one hand, radium pistol in the other, pursuing the



foulhearted villain who had carried off my gorgeous and naked princess to face a fate worse than death. Or I was plunging through the Earth's crust with David Innes and Abner Perry, en route to a weird, timeless world within a world. Or I was visiting a strange future in which our planet had been conquered by invaders from the

moon, and heroic survivors fought to free themselves from alien overlords . . . .

How could a young man, stifling in the mundane world of business, resist? I couldn't wait for the later titles to appear. Publication schedules were announced, and when the books were not in Steve's shop on the promised date I was distraught. Every few days I would take the IRT downtown from my home on 73rd Street in the futile pursuit of *The Land That Time Forgot* (1924), *The Monster Men* (1929), and *Tanar of Pellucidar* (1930). I made such a pest of myself that Steve decided to get rid of me. If I wasn't satisfied to wait, he told me, I could just go ask the publishers why the books were late. I was terrified at the thought.

But Steve encouraged me to go ahead. In fact, he insisted. The offices of Canaveral Press were located just a couple of city blocks from Steve's shop.

So, wearing my courage like a cloak, I headed for the offices of Canaveral Press—which turned out to be a cubbyhole in the surplus-stock attic of another book shop, Biblo & Tannen's. Once there, I met everyone in the establishment—Jack Biblo and Jack Tannen, the owners; Alice Ryter, the secretary and business manager; and David Garfinkel, a retired academic who hung around and performed miscellaneous jobs out of sheer love of books. David had grown up on the dime novels that preceded the pulp magazines, and was forever eager to reminisce about Old Sleuth, Baseball Joe, or Buffalo Bill.

The two Jacks had been partners in the book business since the 1920s. They were physically similar, both men of medium height with dark hair and receding hairlines, bushy mustaches and horn-rimmed eyeglasses. They could have passed as brothers. Jack Tannen was a little heavier and more outgoing. Jack Biblo was slimmer, more soft-spoken and retiring. In addition to operating a wonderful used book store, they had been in the business of reprinting books on art and archaeology, mainly for the library trade, and historical novels, mainly for school use.



Over the years, they told me, the most requested of all out-of-print authors had been Burroughs—especially his science-fiction. They had attempted to contact Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc. to inquire about reprint rights, and received no cooperation at all. Operating purely on a hunch, they had searched copyright records through the Library of Congress, and discovered that approximately half of Burroughs' works were in the public domain!

This was under the "old" copyright law, of course. Under our present law, a literary work is copyright for the duration of its author's life plus 50 years. But under the old law, the copyright was good for only 27 years, and could then be renewed for a second, like term. But the renewal was not automatic—it had to be filed for, and Burroughs' personal secretary/business manager/administrative assistant had failed to file for renewals!

I'm afraid that I made a pest of myself again, hanging around the offices of Canaveral Press and complaining about the lateness of the books. (There were scheduling problems at the bindery, it turned out; there was nothing the publisher could do about it.) Finally one of the Jacks said, "Listen, if you're so concerned about this, why don't you come to work for us as an editor?"

The money they offered was too little for me to live on, no less support a growing family—but I wasn't going to pass up this opportunity, either. So we agreed that I would keep my job in the computer business, and work for Canaveral Press on Saturdays. Was I ever thrilled!

Following Canaveral's lead, other publishers had started to get into the act on Burroughs books. Don Wollheim at Ace Books had had the same frustrating experience trying to obtain reprint rights from ERB, Inc. He had published such Burroughs imitators as Otis Adelbert Kline and Ralph Milne Farley as a poor substitute for the real stuff. Now Ace, too, began reprinting public-domain Burroughs books.

Dover Books issued several giant Burroughs omnibuses.

Ian Ballantine, then still running the company that bears his name, flew to California, met with members of the Burroughs family, and finally got them to resume active management of the company.

And Monarch Books, a small company in Connecticut, began publishing a series of new Tarzan books written by the pseudonymous "Barton Werper."

After Ian Ballantine returned from California, there followed a series of meetings, mainly with lawyers. Hulbert Burroughs flew to New York to participate in these. Hulbert Burroughs was most concerned over the new "Werper" books, and I helped him with some research to provide his lawyer with ammunition, should the case ever go to court.

The outcome of the maneuvering was as follows: Monarch and Dover did no further Burroughs titles, and Burroughs, Inc. did not bring suit against them for alleged offenses already committed. Ballantine and Ace divided the paperback rights with Ballantine getting the Tarzan and Mars titles and Ace getting the Pellucidar and Venus books. The miscellaneous books were similarly split up. Canaveral Press would continue to publish Burroughs in hardcover.

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# *Joe Jusko's*

## *Edgar Rice Burroughs COLLECTION*

There's something about a man in a loin-cloth that makes people stand up and take notice. Throw in a helpless babe, a few great apes, a lost safari, a jungle treasure, and you've got yourself a legend...the legend of Tarzan, that is.

For decades, Edgar Rice Burroughs' writings have ensnared the imaginations of those who think that lost cities, exotic animals, and forbidden passion are fairly interesting plot devices. Like many legendary authors, Burroughs fashioned a singularly unforgettable character who remained alive long after his creator's death. Simply, Tarzan is an icon.

Burroughs' Lord (Greystoke) of the Jungle has been adapted to nearly every medium of entertainment, including movies, radio, TV, comics, and newspaper strips. The new "Joe Jusko's Edgar Rice Burroughs Collection Fantasy Art Trading Cards" help pass the jungle lore to another generation of fandom.

As the collection's title hints, the 60-card set features the stunningly painted artwork of Joe Jusko, one of the leading pinup artists of the '90s. Each card is printed and laminated on 24-point stock paper, which is nearly as thick as a credit card and accounts for its sharp, sturdy feel. Stick these trading cards between the spokes of your bicycle and you're likely to be buying new spokes!

Jusko's paintings are startling interpretations of Burroughs' classic short stories and novels, including *The Beasts of Tarzan* (1916), *Jungle Tales of Tarzan* (1919), *Tarzan and the City of Gold* (1933), and *Tarzan the Magnificent* (1939). In addition, Burroughs' John Carter of Mars and Pellucidar series are fully represented. The rich, dramatic colors in this collection exude excitement and energy. They also bring a much-needed contemporary edge to a character deserving of respect and attention, especially in the wake of recent Hollywood "classic character" flops. (Who knows what ineptitude lurks in the heart of Tinseltown? The Shadow knows!)

As an added bonus, the backs of each card feature "Classic Burroughs" illustrations and paintings by such celebrated artists as Frank Frazetta, Burne Hogarth, Neal Adams, and Boris Vallejo. There's even a reprinting of the cover of *The All-Story*, the magazine that first printed *Tarzan of the Apes* in October, 1912.

"Joe Jusko's Edgar Rice Burroughs Collection" is the next best thing to stripping off your clothes and climbing a tree!

—Buddy Scalera



LEFT: Joe Jusko's *Tarzan the Magnificent*. Jusko thinks the painting is "maybe the best thing I've ever done." RIGHT: Jusko's *Tarzan and the Golden Lion*.



LEFT: Jane's okay, but Queen La (about to sacrifice guess who) is a lalapolooza! Jusko's *The Return of Tarzan*. RIGHT: Jusko's *At The Earth's Core*.



LEFT: Jusko's *Tarzan the Invincible*. "How can you spurn a woman with such great taste in clothes?" RIGHT: Jusko's *The Return of Tarzan*.



## MR. BURROUGHS AND ME

*Continued from page 74*

So much for Burroughs reprints.

But then there arose the even more exciting topic of first editions. There were a number of Burroughs stories that had appeared in magazine form but had never been gathered into books. And when an inventory was conducted of manuscripts in Burroughs' old office safe, Fate sprang the greatest surprise of all: Completely unpublished stories turned up. Some were early works, stories that failed to sell. These might be of historic interest. But there were others—a complete Tarzan novel, a Pellucidar novelette that would round out a series published in the early 1940s, a sequel to the novelette *Beyond the Farthest Star* (1964), a historical novel set in Imperial Rome!

These were to appear in Canaveral Press editions, and I was to be the editor. What a far cry from that splintery wooden bench where the odor of chicken droppings filled the air!

Working with the two Jacks, Alice, and David, I set out on the task.

Mahlon Blaine, already an old man when he had illustrated the first few Canaveral Press editions, had retired. We worked with new artists including Al Williamson, his wife Arlene Williamson, the great Roy Krenkel, Frank Frazetta, Reed Crandall, and Larry Ivie. Most of these artists had been associated with the old EC comic-book line of the 1950s—illustrators whose work I had admired in my teens. Now, 10 years later, they were working for me!

There was a lot of variety in their personalities, as there was in their drawing styles. Reed Crandall, for instance, came across as an Iowa farm boy, straw hat and all. Modest, sweet-natured, cooperative. Al Williamson was a handsome, exotic figure who had been born in Chile of Scots parents, traveled to the United States to pursue his career, and learned English as a second language. Arlene Williamson was an exceptionally beautiful woman who created maps and calligraphy for some of our books.

Frank Frazetta was hugely talented and completely businesslike. Give him an assignment, give him a schedule, and on the appointed day you would have the work—and it would be superb! Roy Krenkel

PAGE 74: Richard A. Lupoff hovers over Glenn "Tarzan" Morris and Edgar Rice Burroughs. LEFT: Two *Monster Men* illos by Larry Ivie. BELOW: *The Monster Men* via Bernie Wrightson.

was equally talented, but utterly unbusinesslike. Roy refused to have a telephone in the home he shared with his aged parents. If you wanted to confer with him you would send him a letter enclosing a dime and ask him to call you. If the weather was pleasant and the mood struck him right, he would walk to a candy store and call you from the pay phone. He was a perfectionist in his work, and would not turn in an assignment until he was satisfied with it. You could admire his dedication, but his perfectionism also made it almost impossible to work with him. Schedules meant nothing.

I remember having lunch with Don Wollheim one day in the early 1960s. He'd been getting Krenkel

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TARZAN

OF THE  
FUNNY PAGES

## Gray Morrow interviewed by Buddy Scalera

For more than 13 years, now, Gray Morrow has been the artist who draws the Tarzan Sunday comic strip. He is one of the industry's consummate professionals and is especially appreciated for his flowing line work.

Scarlet Street recently tracked down Gray Morrow and asked him about his jungle adventures with the King of the Apes, his own long history in comics, and with whom he'd like to be trapped on a desert isle . . .

*Scarlet Street: What led to your work with writer Don Kraar on the Tarzan comic strip?*

**Gray Morrow:** Well, I was an editor for Red Circle Comics. I was buying stories and artwork from various guys in the business, and Don happened to be one of the writers I picked out. When the Tarzan script came up, I just thought of him first.

*SS: When you took on the project, did you find yourself intimidated by the legendary status of the character?*

**GM:** I seem fated to wind up doing all the characters that I grew up on, that I adored. I've done Prince Valiant, Flash Gordon, Tarzan, Buck Rogers . . .

*SS: Is there any other character that you'd like to tackle?*

**GM:** Well, let's see, I haven't done the Lone Ranger yet. I wouldn't mind that. The Shadow, I guess. Anything from the pulps—the Spider, the Shadow, the Phantom Detective . . .

*SS: Were any limitations placed on your handling of Tarzan by the Edgar Rice Burroughs people?*

**GM:** The only time I ever heard from the Burroughs people was when they reminded me that the logo's supposed to be red and yellow—which I ignored, because if the panel was also orange or

red or yellow, it wouldn't work. It's very strange, but the people at United Features seem loathe to have any contact with Burroughs, except strictly in a business way.

*SS: What is your working method with Don Kraar?*

**GM:** It's pretty much Don's show as far as the writing is concerned.

anatomy, I've done a lot of research in that! (Laughs)

*SS: What about the Tarzan films? Do you use them for reference?*

**GM:** Well, I have quite a film collection on videotape, and some of them are certainly some Tarzan films. But I don't religiously watch them and then sit down and try to draw them.

*SS: What do you think of the newer Tarzan movies?*

**GM:** I think they're all ultimately forgettable. I'm surprised that the Burroughs people licensed them. The Bo Derek stuff was sheer exploitation. It didn't do the image any good, but the character is such that he can stand it. Tarzan is an icon. He's like Sherlock Holmes or Superman or Hercules. He's a myth that will persist down through the annals of time.

*SS: Do the films borrow anything from your strips?*

**GM:** Not that I noted. When I was doing Buck Rogers, the TV show borrowed my designs for rocketships and costumes—with no thank you's—but as far as Tarzan goes, no, I can't say that ever happened.

*SS: How does the film industry treat comic-book artists?*

**GM:** Well, a lot of producers and directors—people like Spielberg and Lucas—admit to having been influenced by comics. They are much more open about it than ever before. I was astounded one day to be watching an adventure show, and the dialogue between the principals took place in an airplane—but you saw the plane flying through the air and you just heard the dialogue. In other words, if that had been a comic-book panel, I'd have drawn the plane and two word balloons with tails going to the plane. It ob-



Gray Morrow at work

Once in awhile, I'll suggest something that I'd like to see or have an opportunity to draw. The current episodes, where Tarzan goes to Mars, was my idea, but it took a couple of years to get around to formulating it. I think it's the best thing that we've done together. To have Tarzan meet Burroughs' other famous character, John Carter of Mars . . .

*SS: What type of visual references do you use for Tarzan?*

**GM:** I don't use much reference I have a file, of course. I get a lot of mail from the Burroughs fan club, and I got them to provide photographs of themselves to insert as background characters. They get a big kick out of it.

*SS: Your artwork shows a lot of attention to anatomy.*

**GM:** I never thought about it much. When it comes to female

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## GRAY MORROW

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viously was influenced by comics, and I think you'll ultimately see more and more things like that.

SS: People point to you as a pioneer in the industry. What is it like to have artists say, "I was influenced by Gray Morrow?"

GM: It makes me feel like a dinosaur. (Laughs)

SS: Just two more questions: If you were ever stranded on a desert island, the things you'd want to have with you . . .

GM: A sexy blonde.

SS: We said "things."

GM: Oh, things! Two sexy blondes! (Laughs)

SS: Last question: On your deathbed, your final word will be . . .

GM: Rosebud!



© Edgar Rice Burroughs Inc.

## MR. BURROUGHS AND ME

Continued from page 76

covers for some Ace Books, and he asked me if we were planning to continue using Roy for Canaveral Press. I said that I loved Roy's work—and Roy himself, a delightful person—but that I would have a very hard time giving him any further assignments. Don said that he had the same problem.

The books that eventually appeared in Canaveral Press first editions were *Savage Pellucidar* (1963), *Tarzan and the Castaways* (1964), *Tarzan and the Madman* (1964), *Tales of Three Planets* (1964), and *John Carter of Mars* (1964). The Roman novel, *I Am a Barbarian*, was eventually published by Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc. in 1967. All of them were eventually issued in paperbacks by either Ace or Ballantine, sometimes with stories reshuffled, titles changed, and other unpublished material added—nightmares for collectors and bibliographers, the greatest of which was Henry Hardy Heins, whose magnificent Burroughs bibliographies in time became highly prized collectibles themselves.

Most of these books carried either introductions or bibliographic notes, that I was called upon to write. One of them, at least—*Savage Pellucidar*—had dust-jacket copy by Edgar Rice Burroughs himself! He had written it back in the 1940s, and it had lain gathering dust for 20 years!

I was concerned over the total length of some of our books, in particular *John Carter of Mars*. There wasn't very much John Carter material—two novellas, one of them of dubious authenticity—and I worried that it just wouldn't bulk up enough to make a decent book. The Jacks told me to make up the difference by writing an introduction. A long introduction. I started work on an essay titled, as I recall it, "Edgar Rice Burroughs: Science Fiction Writer."

When I finished my work, I proudly marched into the Canaveral Press office and dropped off the manuscript. Neither Jack was present, but Alice said she'd give it to whichever of them came in first.

The next time I visited the office, I was confronted by an angry man in horn-rimmed glasses and a bristling moustache. He brandished a fat manila envelope beneath my nose. I knew what was in the envelope—it could only be the manuscript!

Jack (which of the two Jacks, I do not remember) waved the envelope menacingly and demanded to know, "What's this?"

"It's my introduction for *John Carter of Mars*," I said.

"This? But look at the size of it!"

"You said to make it long."

"Not that long!"

I had fallen into a shaggy dog story!

"What do you want me to do?" I asked.

"Go home and do another introduction for *John Carter of Mars*. And make it short!" And he shoved my fat manila envelope, the product of long and painstaking research and uncounted hours of work, into my hands.

I accepted the envelope. Heartbroken, I asked, "What should I do with the old version?"

"Take it with you," Jack said. "And when you finish writing the new, short introduction for *John Carter of Mars*, you can start researching the Tarzan stories and the rest of Burroughs' works. Then you can write the rest of your book. If it's as good as the first half"—and he pointed at my manila envelope—"Canaveral Press will publish it!"

While Canaveral Press was far from a failure, it was not nearly the success that the two Jacks—and the rest of us—had hoped it would be. The greatest potential, we all felt, lay in those five Burroughs "origins." We felt that we should have a year's head start before these books appeared in paperback. But the Burroughs people insisted on retaining full control of those books, and they authorized paperbacks so fast that they appeared right on the heels of our hardcovers. A book would no sooner go on sale than a paperback would go into competition with it. We could determine the date and time of publication

of these paperbacks almost to the hour, just by tracking the collapse of the sales of the hardcovers.

There are just so many first-edition collectors out there, and a great many more readers or casual collectors who don't require hardcovers and firsts. We could never get that message across to the Burroughs people, and we paid bitterly for their insistence.

The other Canaveral Press books—the de Camp and the Smith—performed adequately if not spectacularly for a small company with limited facilities to promote and distribute its publications. When the company ceased publishing new titles, we returned properties already in house. These included a novel by James Blish and Norman L. Knight (*A Torrent of Faces*), later published by Doubleday, and an excellent novel by Ed Ludwig. I don't know what became of the book or of Ludwig.

Other properties that had come to Canaveral and been turned down for one reason or another were very varied. Some, I regretted having to turn down. Others were—well, let me give you a few examples.

Jerry Siegel, the writer who created Superman, offered to do a series of books for us. I would have loved to take them, but Siegel required a substantial advance that we just couldn't afford to pay, so that project, unfortunately, went a-glimmering.

Sprague de Camp offered us the revised and collated Conan series. This proposal was turned down mainly on my judgment, on the grounds that the old Gnome Press edition had saturated all possible readership for Conan. Was I ever wrong!

We were offered an "unauthorized" Burroughs biography called *The Big Swingers*. We turned it down and it later found a home elsewhere.

I wanted to issue the collected Captain Future stories by Edmond Hamilton, in hardcover. I was over-

ruled on that one, but I still think that I was right. A later paperback series came out with bad covers and no support from the publisher, yet today even these poor editions are sought after. I think that an attractively produced, matching set of the books would have been an achievement.

There were other experiences, some of them pretty unsavory, others just silly. For instance, there was the self-identified pornographer who was going to produce a "great" science fiction novel for us. He sent in a portion and outline, and the book was just dreadful. It went back like a shot! And there was the elementary-school teacher who wanted us to publish a volume of poems by fourth-grade students. We declined politely. And there was the literary agent, since deceased, from whom I tried to buy a book by Avram Davidson. The agent didn't answer his mail, and whenever I phoned him he was too drunk to carry on negotiations. The book later appeared as a paperback original.

Back in those days of the early 1960s, when Ace Books was issuing Burroughs titles from the public-domain list, Don Wollheim asked various Burroughs fans to write introductory notes for them. I did several of these, and also one for a book called *Lieutenant Gullivar Jones: His Vacation*, by Edwin Lester Arnold. This was a forerunner rather than an imitation of Burroughs' Martian novels, as I pointed out in my introduction. In *Edgar Rice Burroughs: Master of Adventure*, I expanded on the theme of Burroughs' antecedents and sources, which struck me as both an interesting and a valid area of investigation. To my dismay, a number of fanatical Burroughs fans thought that this comprised *lese majesty*, and my name became mud for them.

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Thank heaven for sexy butts—without them, what would Burroughs artists do? Turning the other cheeks below, we uncover Bill Stout's painting for a 1989 edition of *The Monster Men* (LEFT), Michael Whelan's cover painting for the 1979 Ballantine/Del Rey edition of *Llana of Gathol* (CENTER), and a John Carter of Mars illustration by Frank Frazetta.



From the pages of the legendary  
**CASTLE OF**  
**FRANKENSTEIN**

"One eye was fully twice the diameter of the other, and an inch above the horizontal plans of its tiny mate. The nose was but a gaping orifice above a deformed and twisted mouth. The thing was chinless, and its small, foreheadless head surmounted its colossal body like a cannon ball on a hill top. One arm was at least twelve inches longer than its mate, which was itself long in proportion to the torso, while the legs, similarly mismatched and terminating in huge, flat feet that protruded laterally, caused the thing to lurch fearfully from side to side as it lumbered toward the girl."

**T**hese words vividly describing the hideous creation of a mad scientist's blasphemous ambition—who wrote them? Could they be the product of Mary W. Shelley, authoress of the greatest "monster book" of them all, *Frankenstein*? Could they have been penned by Bram Stoker, who chilled the world with *Dracula*? Or would you guess the author to be H. P. Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith, Robert Bloch . . . or perhaps J. Sheridan le Fanu, or Charles Maturin?

Any of those would be a good try, if you were guessing, but none of them is right, for the horrid words quoted above appear on page 33 and 34 of *The Monster Men* by Edgar Rice Burroughs. That's right—Edgar Rice Burroughs, the man who is known to the world as the creator of Tarzan of the Apes.

Millions of fans thrill to the adventures of the Lord of the Jungle, whether they see them in the new films of Jock Mahoney, or the classic screen treatments featuring Johnny Weissmuller, Buster Crabbe, Glenn Morris, Lex Barker, or any other of the baker's dozen Hollywood stars who have portrayed Tarzan since Elmo Lincoln first appeared in a silent Tarzan film almost 50 years ago.

Of course, Tarzan was not invented as a movie hero—the films have all been adaptations, more or less faithful, of the novels of Edgar Rice Burroughs, whose first Tarzan book appeared in 1914, and whose latest, *Tarzan and the Madman*, is making its first appearance in the spring of 1964—on the Golden Anniversary of the first book of Tarzan.

Not as famous as the Tarzan stories (which have been spread, aside from their book form, in magazines, comic strips, comic books, bubble gum cards, radio shows, phonograph records, and just about every other medium there is!), are Edgar Rice Burroughs' other works. Fewer than half of his books are about Tarzan; the rest range from science-fiction to Westerns to romances to mysteries . . . to monsters!

*The Monster Men* is itself a wonderful story, involving a scientist who seeks, like the original Dr. Frankenstein, to create artificial human life. Instead of the famous operating table of Dr. Frankenstein, Burroughs' scientist, Dr. Maxon, has a series of chemical vats. Assisted by the wicked von Horn, Dr. Maxon produces one experiment after another, 13 in all. Each is another attempt to create a perfect human being. The description at the beginning of this article is the author's word picture of Experiment Number One. And when Number One "lurch(ed) fearfully from side to side as it lumbered toward the girl," that girl was none other than Maxon's beautiful daughter, Virginia.

The setting of the professor's laboratory in *The Monster Men* is far from the Transylvanian castles of *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*. Instead, Maxon's laboratory is located within a walled compound on a jungle isle, far in the Pacific. The hero of the story is Experiment Number Thirteen, who has two identities in addition to his laboratory number. One is that of Bulan, in which role he swings through the tropical jungle in finest Tarzan fashion.

The other is . . . a surprise, and I won't be the one to give it away if I can help it.

Burroughs used the *Frankenstein* theme and the monster theme in general in many of his science-fiction and adventure story novels.

In *The Land That Time Forgot*, on a lost continent located near the Antarctic Ocean, Burroughs provides a complete range of monsters—dinosaurs, pterodactyls, and most fascinating of all, the terrifying Wieros. The Wieros are hideous, manlike creatures equipped with leathery, reptilian wings, they live in a city built entirely of human skulls . . . the awful relics of their countless victims.

The Wieros are, of course, just one small aspect of the fantastic array of imaginative creatures populating the territory of Caspax in this Burroughs novel, but we must skip over the rest if we are to get to Burroughs' other monsters in the space allotted to us.

There are, for instance, the denizens of the lost world of Pellucidar, featured in a series of seven novels by ERB. These books take place in a land located inside the Earth itself!

#### MR. BURROUGHS AND ME

*Continued from page 79*

I wish I could say that Canaveral Press was a roaring success and that my association with it was a long and happy one. Well, my association was certainly happy. We all got along fine; the two Jacks were like a father and an uncle to me. We published something like 20 Burroughs books, plus a novel by Edward Elmer Smith and a non-fiction book by L. Sprague de

Camp and Catherine C. de Camp, and every project provided education and pleasure for me. Certainly working with "Doc" Smith and Sprague de Camp, two more of my boyhood heroes, was a thrill.

I finished expanding that essay on Burroughs and it became *Edgar Rice Burroughs: Master of Adventure* (1965). Two Canaveral Press editions sold out, and I have seen copies on sale in recent years for as much as \$200 or more. At one science-fiction convention, a

**RIGHT:** Larry Ivie's illustration for Edgar Rice Burroughs' *The Return of Tarzan*.

The series opens with two scientists, the young David Innes and his companion, Abner Perry, burrowing into the earth in a new invention of Perry's—the Iron Mole, a device intended to be used in prospecting for mineral deposits.

Instead, of all things, David and Abner Perry discover a whole lost world, located 500 miles beneath the crust of the Earth, lighted by a miniature sun and inhabited by humans, beasts both primitive and modern, and monstrous races of intelligent beings never known on the outer world.

There are the Mahars, a race of giant, intelligent reptiles, winged as are pterodactyls, hideous, gloomy creatures that delight in eating humans. Or the Thipcars, the true, giant pteranodons of Pellucider, who feed people to their young.

Or the Horibs, the slimy lizard-men who keep their prisoners in filthy subterranean caves where the fetid atmosphere of captured air bubbles is all that they have to breathe while being fattened for the slaughter and feast.

Burroughs was a great one for dinosaurs and other horrors. His famous Venus series abounds with beasts. These books tell the story of the adventurous Carson Napier, whose ill-fated space flight, intended to bring him to Mars, goes wrong and nearly plunges him to flaming death in the sun.

Instead, he manages to crash-land on the planet Venus, where, in his adventures, he encounters such strange creatures as these:

The Klangan: Another race of winged, manlike creatures. Unlike the Wieros and the Mahars, the Klangan are birdlike, rather than reptilian.

The Basto: A hideous creature of Venus, with horns, fangs, and a vicious temperament. And Bastos grow as large as 1200 pounds! Watch out for Bastos!

The Brokols: A strange people of Venus who produce seeds instead of having babies! The seeds are planted, and grow into trees, upon which grow the new generation of—Brokols!

The Kloonobargan: "Venusian cavemen" is about the best way to describe these fellow hairy, stupid, but they make good soldiers!

The Mistal: A Venusian rat—but as big as a house cat!

The Myposans: These are the best (or worst) of all—fish-men whose young are actually little fish raised in ponds by slaves. As they grow up, they change into manlike creatures, but they always keep their pop eyes, their webbed fingers, and toes—and their gills!



And there is Tharban and the Tongzan and the hideous Vere; the intelligent, amoeba-like Vooyorgans and the Zorat and the cannibalistic Zangans, and the huge Zaldar and the smaller Neozaldar . . .

All in all, Burroughs' Venus series is about as full of monsters and strange beasts and stranger people as the most hardened fan could wish.

And, of course, there's Burroughs' Mars series. Here again are monsters of many sorts, and daring heroes leading marvelous adventures galore! Here are a few of the titles: *A Fighting Man of Mars* (with more giant spiders, and a mad king who delights in tortures!) and *The Gods of Mars* (with cannibalistic man-plant-beasts, and an underground kingdom where an ancient religion is continued in secret), and such stories as "The Giant of Mars" or "Skeleton Men of Jupiter," both of which are included in the book *John Carter of Mars*.

The Giant of Mars is another Frankenstein-like creature, while the Skeleton Men are terrifying creatures whose very bones are visible through their thin, transparent flesh!

*Continued on page 102*

book dealer tried to sell one to me at that price, not knowing who I was! I examined the copy and recognized it—it was one that I had inscribed for my old friend, Steve Takacs. Takacs had since died, and the book had passed from his estate through who knew how many hands before being offered back to me! *Edgar Rice Burroughs: Master of Adventure* was reprinted by Ace Books, and the paperback edition went through at least three printings.

A companion volume, *Barsoom: Edgar Rice Burroughs and the Martian Vision*, was commissioned by Ballantine Books some years later. Unfortunately, the manuscript got caught up in a squabble between my editor and his boss, and kept coming back for revisions time after time. Finally we parted company, the book was returned, and finally published by Mi-

*Continued on page 102*

# A Little Nightmare Music

## John Morgan interviewed by Richard Scrivani

The melancholy wail of a mad blacksmith's battered horn, a spirited gypsy dance contrasting with the sorrowful dirge of an old woman's prayer, a beautiful melody for a young woman and her invisible lover. These and other cinematic moments were immortalized in music decades ago—created as background for some of Universal Picture's most memorable fantasy images, crafted by a team of hard-working, under-appreciated composers, prominent among them the young Hans J. Salter.

Toiling away in a modern Los Angeles apartment, a tall, soft-spoken gentleman painstakingly reconstructs these and myriad other lyrical passages and readies them for recording by a modern symphony orchestra. The objective: the preservation of several film scores from horror's Golden Age and the chance for new generations to experience them in concert form. The name of this gifted film composer and practitioner of musical archaeology is John Morgan.

With last year's release of Salter's music in a CD entitled *MUSIC FOR FRANKENSTEIN*, John Morgan and Marco Polo Records tapped a vein of orchestral gold with 67 minutes of atmospheric cues from *GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1942) and *HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1944). Currently, Morgan and associate Bill Stromberg are in the finishing stages of an exciting followup project for Marco Polo: the recreation in suite form of three major horror scores: *SON OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1939), *THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS* (1940), and *THE WOLF MAN* (1941), as well as a second, complete recording of Salter's *HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN*.

On the following pages, an enthusiastic John Morgan shares with *Scarlet Street* some of the ups and downs of the creative process, and lets us in on his hopes for the new releases. He also candidly reflects on disappointments with projects past.

A long-neglected musical legacy is about to be restored to us, and the response of its audience will determine its future . . .





**LEFT:** We recognize the big guy on the table, but whose shadow is on the wall? **RIGHT:** Music reconstructionist John Morgan, conductor Bill Stromberg, and Moscow producer Edvard Shakhnazazian listen to a playback in the engineering room. A Frankenstein Monster mask, pinned to the wall, looks on.



**Scarlet Street:** What was the origin of the first Hans J. Salter project, *MUSIC FOR FRANKENSTEIN*? Did Marco Polo Records approach you?

**John Morgan:** No, it was really Tony Thomas, who knew Hans before I did. Tony has written many books on film music, and he put out *THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN* from Salter's original tape. Well, Tony thought it would be a wonderful idea to record the score, to do *GHOST* complete on a CD, because Hans was still alive. He quickly found out that Universal had thrown

away all the music. It would have to be completely reorchestrated from the piano score that Hans had. So I came in, and I decided that it would be repetitious just to have *GHOST*. I thought about teaming *GHOST* with *HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN*, because *HOUSE* had the Wolf Man and Dracula music, too. Hans was so excited. It took me four or five months to do the two scores. A friend of mine, Bill Stromberg, helped out on *HOUSE* 'til we just ran out of time. We had to get it to the copyist in Bratislava to hand-

copy all the parts for the orchestra. Bill is also a composer and a conductor—I don't conduct—and he's going to be conducting the upcoming two horror discs.

**SS:** It must have been wonderful for Salter to get recognition at last.

**JM:** He was very excited. I said, "Well, it's a big responsibility, but I'm glad to do it, because I love the music." He said, "Well, make it better than it was." I told him, "I couldn't really do that; just to get it the way you had it would be fine"—and he smiled.

**LEFT:** During the recording sessions with the Moscow Symphony, John Morgan and Bill Stromberg confer over the cue "Dr. Niemann Successful," which triggers *HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN*'s climax. **RIGHT:** The Wolf Man (Lon Chaney Jr.) claims a victim (Elena Verdugo) in *HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1944).



*SS: No doubt it was frustrating, then, when MUSIC FOR FRANKENSTEIN didn't live up to expectations.*

*JM: I had no contact with the conductor. I sent a tape with the music copied off the original soundtrack, but somehow it never got to the conductor. He never contacted me, and I didn't know who he was until after it was recorded! It was the blind leading the blind.*

*SS: Why couldn't you personally supervise the sessions?*

*JM: Well, it was financial. It's very expensive to send someone over there, plus I was doing a film, so it was hard to get away. They had another conductor pegged for it at one time, but he dropped out and they got Andrew Penney.*

*SS: And he wasn't familiar with the original scores?*

*JM: No, not at all. He never contacted me. I tried to get hold of him, but it was too late—it was already recorded. You know, it's important that the orchestrator be there, because when wrong notes creep in you need someone there to say, "Hey! That oboe should be a D Flat, not a D Sharp!"*

*SS: Weren't cues left off HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN?*

*JM: Right. I originally wrote two suites for the two films at 33 minutes apiece. I think they recorded GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN first, and it was more difficult than they thought. The conductor took it at so lethargic a tempo that they ran out of time and had to drop three or four cues from HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN. As it is, the album would have been one minute shorter—I think it's 67 minutes—if they'd done it up to tempo and used the other cues for HOUSE. That shows you how overtime they went because of the slow, pedestrian performance. I mean, the main title for GHOST was almost like a funeral! Hans grew to like it; he said he didn't mind the slow tempos because he heard different things that he hadn't heard before. He got used to it.*

*SS: What led to your interest in the Salter scores?*

*JM: Probably the first score that really impressed me was when KING KONG was released to television in the mid-'50s. Soon after that, they released most of the Universal horror films on SHOCK*

THEATER. That was my first exposure to those films and the music. I knew even then that the music played a big part in making those films effective. I had a reel-to-reel tape recorder and would tape the soundtracks of favorite films, and edit it down to the music portions, which I know a lot of fans did. It

ing and praying for a complete HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN. I told him how disappointed I was in some of the conducting on the first recording, and he wrote to Klaus Heymann, the head of Marco Polo, suggesting that we do an entire album of HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN. Klaus Heymann said,

"Do you think that's feasible?" I said, "Oh, yeah, that's probably one of the richest scores of all." Lo and behold—and it's unbelievable to all of us—we're doing an entire album of HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN!

*SS: That is unusual.*

*JM: Once these recordings are done, you say, "Well, that's it, right or wrong. There's never to be another opportunity to do it." It turned out that Marco Polo is very farsighted as far as film music goes; they've recognized it as an art form, and they want to do things that are different. I get so annoyed with these albums that come out of Bernard Herrmann and Max Steiner music, and you get maybe one or two new five-minute pieces and the rest is things we've heard to death. Klaus Heymann and Marco Polo want all the music that they do to be new to records, or new to CDs. They don't want another cut-down Gerhart.*

*SS: That's Charles Gerhart, who did the RCA series of film scores by composers such as Korngold, Steiner, and Waxman.*

*JM: So many of these new recordings simply take his suites and cut them down and replay them. But Marco Polo is different. They want to do maybe two or three American film music albums a year.*

*SS: What further Salter recordings are planned?*

*JM: We're doing the complete HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN. At the same time, we're doing an album that's going to consist of a suite from Skinner's SON OF FRANKENSTEIN, Salter's music from THE WOLF MAN—*

*although Skinner and Charles Previn also wrote music for it—and THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS.*

*SS: Isn't SON OF FRANKENSTEIN worthy of a complete treatment?*

*JM: Well, there's quite a bit of repetition, so I tried to use most of the different cues but cut down, rather than leaving whole parts out of it. I almost left out the be-*



Boris Karloff plays peek-a-boo in *HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1944), his first film in the Frankenstein series since *SON OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1939). The scores for both flicks have been recorded by Marco Polo Records (though only *HOUSE* is complete).

was always fun trying to find the cues that were unmarred by dialogue or sound effects, trying to put 'em together in the most complete form possible.

*SS: Who's involved in making the second recording of HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN?*

*JM: Bill Whittaker. He's a nut on this music, too, and he was hop-*

ginning when Rathbone is talking about his father because it didn't thematically relate, but I put it back in. It's very mournful with the organ. I also restored—I wasn't going to, but enough fans told me they had to have it—the little march when Lionel Atwill talks about how his arm got ripped off.

**SS:** How do you reconstruct a score?

**JM:** I'll take SON OF FRANKENSTEIN for an example, since we knew we couldn't do every note of it. What I do first is go through the whole film, tape all the music portions, and lay that out. From there, I whittle it down to where I don't have repeats or reuse of music, and try to make a suite out of it on tape. I listen to that, kind of live with it for awhile, and then say, "Okay, this is gonna be it." With SON, it came to about 23 minutes of music. Next I get the piano parts, and play and compare them to what I'm hearing in the film. I make little changes, little notes about the instrumentation. Then we start orchestrating, doing all the parts for the entire orchestra. I'll be honest and say that, whenever there's reconstruction, when you don't have the original orchestra-

tions, there's going to be hundreds of little things that are different.

**SS:** How many pieces are in the RTE Concert Orchestra?

**JM:** I think it was 65. Of course, Hans originally had only 30.

**SS:** Some fans may think it doesn't sound right with a larger orchestra.

**JM:** Well, that's ridiculous! Mozart or Mahler or any composer had varying sized orchestras, and Hans and Max Steiner and every composer I've talked to from the Golden Age said they would have loved to have used an 80-piece orchestra for their scores.

**SS:** Do you think it's important that the recording tempo match the tempo of the music as heard in the film?

**JM:** Not a hundred percent. If it's good enough to be recorded away from the film, it's good enough to stand up to different interpretations. Saying that, I also have to say that very few recordings have the excitement of the original film tracks.

**SS:** How do you denote tempo on the music sheets, and how accurately is that communicated to a conductor who doesn't know the music?

**JM:** Well, we put tempo markings in kind of broad terms. For in-

stance, the main title for GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN is "majestic," and there are a lot of different interpretations for that. Unless you do it to a "click" track or actually conduct it to a film, there's no way you'll get it exactly.

**SS:** Has Universal been cooperative about these fresh recordings of their original scores?

**JM:** Yes, but they had nothing to offer. They didn't have conductor parts. They didn't have anything. They were fine with us doing the recordings, but they just didn't have any of the elements we needed to put it together. I had to get some of the conductor parts from SON OF FRANKENSTEIN and THE WOLF MAN from the Library of Congress! Luckily, when they made these conductor parts they used to copyright the music separately—not only what was married to the film, but they had to have piano parts to send to the copyright office. A lot of the music was preserved in that form.

**SS:** Other composers besides Hans Salter worked on the score of HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN.

**JM:** I was annoyed that Paul Dessau didn't get any credit on the first

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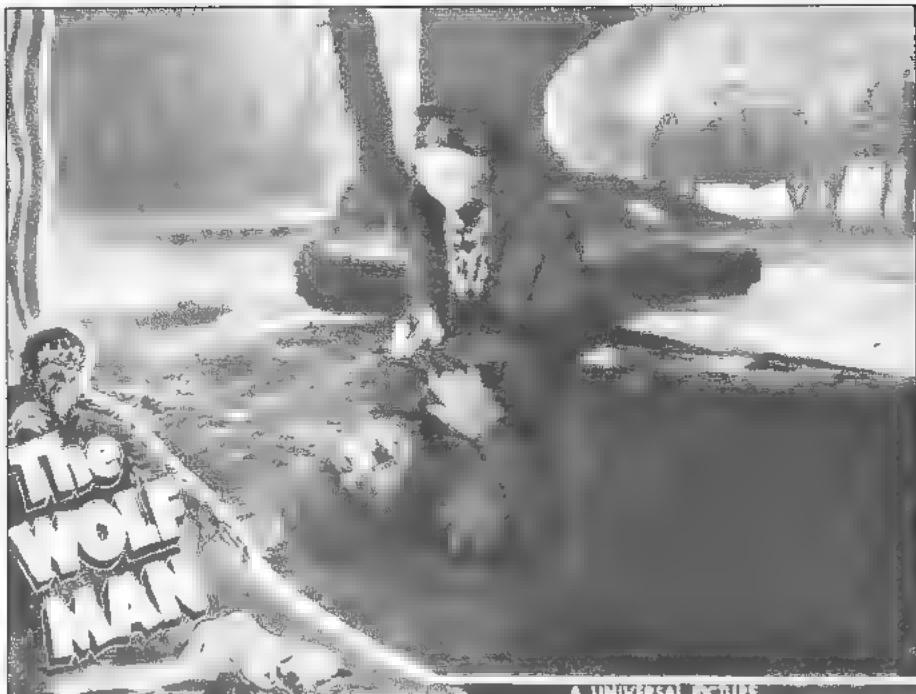
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A UNIVERSAL PICTURE

**LEFT:** 1941's *THE WOLF MAN* (represented here by a lobby card featuring Lon Chaney Jr. and Maria Ouspenskaya) will be one of the Universal Horrors given a "suite" treatment in a new Marco Polo recording. **RIGHT:** Glenn Strange struts his stiff-armed stuff in *HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1944).



album, because he played a big role in making that score so dissonant and modernistic. He was a German friend of Hans' who was having a bad time. He was a fine composer, but when you're in pictures you can't make money at times. Hans had him write some music for *HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN*. As it turned out, he wasn't good with timing, so Hans had to adapt Dessau's music, but he kept in the kind of "salty dissonance" that Dessau had. Of course, all the thematic material came from Salter—Frankenstein, the Wolf Man theme, the Dracula theme—but he did some wonderful variations. That's why the score holds up so well, because it's got a different viewpoint, a fresh outlook on some oft heard music.

**SS:** Which sections of the score were written by Paul Dessau?

**JM:** On the new recording, the only parts that he didn't do anything on was the stuff they replayed from *FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN*. I'm taking liberties with *HOUSE* because, who knows, these might be the two last albums done for awhile. There are two cues from *FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN*, one in

the ice cavern, and one called "Travels." They just "dial" it in and out of *HOUSE* a few times. I'm going back to *FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN* and doing the complete "Travels" and the longer version of the ice-caverns music.

**SS:** Did Hans Salter ever use any unconventional instruments?

**JM:** He used novachords and organs, but he didn't really go way out. His feeling for the macabre is really in the notes rather than in unusual orchestrations. Universal had a standard orchestra; they didn't have a lot of weird instruments that they could bring in, especially with the budgets they had. But Hans had such a wonderful, unique style, and Skinner influenced him with his chordal sense from *SON OF FRANKENSTEIN*.

**SS:** Can you describe the novachord and how Salter used it?

**JM:** It's like an organ. It has keys, but now it's pretty obsolete. For its day, a Hammond organ or novachord was the closest thing to a synthesizer to get weird, unusual sounds. Max Steiner used both in *ARSENIC AND OLD LACE* and *THE BEAST WITH FIVE FINGERS*.

**SS:** What can you tell us about the *WOLF MAN* music?

**JM:** *THE WOLF MAN* has wonderful stuff, but a lot of it we already did in *GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN*. That cue "The Kill" is used about

three times in the film. I was going to use it at the end of the suite, but I felt that we should have it at the beginning, too.

**SS:** Was the gypsy music in *WOLF MAN* and *HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* composed by Salter?

**JM:** In *HOUSE*, the gypsy music was actually written by Max Rapp and Milt Rosen. The guy who did the gypsy music for *THE WOLF MAN*, his first name was Bela. I think we're using a bit of that music, from the scene when Talbot meets Maleva in the tent.

**SS:** Would you ever consider recording Frank Skinner's fine score for *ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN*?

**JM:** At one time, we were thinking of doing *SON OF FRANKENSTEIN* and *A&C MEET FRANKENSTEIN* together. I think it's a delightful score, and one of the reasons we haven't done it right away is because we were concentrating on horror rather than comedy . . . although listening to the music you wouldn't know it was a comedy because it's so well written.

**SS:** What do you think of the recent Silva Screen recording of *BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN*?

**JM:** Frankly, knowing that they had found the original orchestrations by Clifford Vaughn, I was surprised that it wasn't better than it was. The thing that dis-

Richard Scivani is a videotape engineer at the National Broadcasting Company and a regular contributor to Scarlet Street.



LEFT: 1944's *HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (represented here by a lobby card featuring Glenn Strange and Boris Karloff) gets the complete treatment in the second Marco Polo recording of the score. RIGHT: Evelyn Ankers gets a lift from Lon Chaney Jr. in *THE WOLF MAN* (1941).

appointed me most was that they claimed they restored everything, but the main title is still the cut version. It was a music-editing cut. It wasn't something that Franz Waxman rewrote; they just put two cues together. You can hear the music as Waxman originally recorded it in one of those Crime Club things—*THE BLACK DOLL*, I think. The saddest thing—and you can put this on the record—was their using that lousy orchestra!

*SS: Do you have any interest in other Salter-scored horror movies?*

*JM: Well, *BLACK FRIDAY* has some wonderful thematic material that was used initially in that film. That's what I go by.*

*SS: *FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN* also has some unique original music.*

*JM: Yes, because it was readapted specifically for that film. They did-*

*n't just take old music and play it at a different tempo.*

*SS: And how about *THE MUMMY'S HAND*?*

*JM: Well, there's some wonderful stuff. You know that chant with the choir? Hans later used it with an alto flute in *THE MUMMY'S GHOST*. He used the same cue, but Universal couldn't afford the voices! (Laughs) If we did a *MUMMY'S HAND* suite, there would be some wonderful slow mood music, but all the exciting stuff is from *SON OF FRANKENSTEIN*.*

*SS: How about some of the horror films from the '30s?*

*JM: Someday I'd love to do some of the pre-1938 Laemmle Universal films. *DRACULA'S DAUGHTER* has, I think, a haunting score. There was a lot of music dropped from *THE MUMMY*, since they cut the film radically before they released*

*it, and the music was already written. *THE INVISIBLE MAN* has some wonderful cues . . . not too many, but that opening is wonderful.*

*SS: Let's hope you're happier with the new recordings than you were with *MUSIC FOR FRANKENSTEIN**

*JM: I'll tell you the truth: I was very frustrated by some of the wrong notes, but one of the big thrills of my life was taking the tape over to Hans and playing it for him and seeing tears in his eyes. He really felt that he was finally going to be appreciated. He gave so much of his life to those wonderful films, and except for certain genre buffs he'd never gotten his due like some of the other big boys at the bigger studios. He was just so delighted, and I'm so happy that it was recorded in his lifetime.*

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# Our Man on Baker Street

## Michael Cox interviewed by David Stuart Davies

Michael Cox was the great begetter. Without him, there would have been no Granada Sherlock Holmes series, no body of fine adaptations of the Conan Doyle stories, and no Jeremy Brett as Sherlock. We have a lot to thank Michael for. His enthusiasm for the series and the character stemmed from his own interest in Holmes, an interest that he maintains to this day.

Recently, I spoke to this genial and thoughtful fellow about the genesis of the Sherlock project and how the initial series shaped up.

Michael had always had Jeremy Brett in mind for the deer-stalkered crusader, but "Granada wanted to have someone who was a better known name, particularly in the United States. Because they had done BRIDESHEAD REVISITED recently, the names that were suggested to me were Jeremy Irons and Anthony Andrews. I was not convinced, especially about Andrews. I suppose because the project was my baby, they let me have my choice, which was Jeremy [Brett]."

Similarly, Michael had strong ideas about the Watson part. Obviously, he wanted to veer away from the Nigel Bruce version, but he realised there was a danger in letting the pendulum swing too far the other way and presenting the viewers with a stolid, stodgy, and somewhat boring Watson. He had worked with David Burke in other productions and thought he was the ideal man for the role: "A big man, good looking, with a sense of humor."

It looked like it was all systems go and then there were problems with copyright. "The notion was that Mapleton Films, who were producing THE HOUND and THE SIGN OF FOUR with Ian Richardson as the master sleuth, had acquired

the sole rights to the characters of Holmes and Watson for the United States, so they could do what they liked. It was a position that Granada challenged. Eventually we won, but it held our series up by about two years."

Although the Mapleton films were available on video, they had been bought by ITV and stashed away in the vaults for quite a time

Swandan Lane (featured in THE MAN WITH THE TWISTED LIP). They liked the idea, but it was absurdly expensive. We had to compromise somewhat."

The compromise was the building of Baker Street as seen during the opening credits of all the Granada shows. Before this was constructed, there had been a distinguished precedent: the erection of the exterior set of CORONATION STREET, Britain's most popular soap opera. While discussions were being held about the possibility of creating a Baker Street set, Michael told David Plowright, then head of Granada: "If you build Baker Street, David, you could have the two most famous streets in England running side by side." That clinched it.

However, the rationale behind the building of the street was extremely practical: "If the Sherlock Holmes series didn't last for a very long time, the street—which was facade hanging on a very stout steel girder structure—could be ripped off and could be replaced by some other exterior set."

So, the leading actors were cast, the set was built—now it was time to consider scripts and the basic approach to the series. "We were allowed to commission scripts up to 13 episodes, culminating in THE FINAL PROBLEM. Then, if the series was not a success, we could leave Holmes drowned in the Reichenbach Falls."

Writer John Hawkesworth was brought in to work with Michael very early in the planning stages. Hawkesworth had a string of credentials which made him an ideal script consultant. He had worked on such notable TV programmes as UPSTAIRS, DOWNSTAIRS; THE DUCHESS OF DUKE STREET; and a



Michael Cox

before they were shown. This was arranged in order to give Jeremy Brett and David Burke time to establish themselves in the viewers minds as "the" Holmes and Watson.

Michael suggested to Granada that they build "a kind of Victorian London complex, which would be four streets, in fact, which could be turned into all sorts of locations—like a dockside area such as Upper

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LEFT and RIGHT: Jeremy Brett and David Burke as *Sherlock Holmes* and Dr. John H. Watson. CENTER: As *THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES* was launched, Brett and Burke partied with the stars of Granada's *CORONATION STREET* (Julie Goodyear, Johnny Briggs, Barbara Knox, and Jean Alexander).

series of Conan Doyle non-Sherlockian stories sometime in the '60s.

Cox and Hawkesworth proceeded to lay down certain ground rules about the series to guide other writers. For example, Watson would not have a wife or a Mary Morstan romance, and they would ignore any chronologies which attempted to place the stories in certain years or a particular period of Holmes' life.

Separately, the two men drew up a list of the stories they wanted in the series and then compared lists; they were almost identical. "I remember John had 'Silver Blaze' and I think I had 'The Bruce-Partington Plans,' but, of course, we both had 'The Speckled Band,' 'The Red-Headed League,' 'A Scandal in Bohemia,' 'The Blue Carbuncle'—in fact, what you get in the first 13 programs."

I wondered if they had considered showing us the moment when Holmes and Watson met. "I would have loved to, but it belongs so firmly to *A Study in Scarlet* that it would have been difficult to do. Actually, one of our original ideas was to film the first three novels. Then we thought that's not the best way to go, especially with that long flashback in *A Study in Scarlet*. So we decided to do what Conan Doyle did for *The Strand* and do the short stories."

So, in fact, the Granada series started, as did the run in *The Strand*, with "A Scandal in Bohemia." Michael told me that it was John

Hawkesworth's idea to lift a section from *The Sign of Four*—the bit about Holmes' drug taking and the seven-per-cent solution—in order to introduce the characters to the viewers of the 1980s. Although "Scandal" was the first shown, it was not the first to be filmed. Michael wanted Brett and Burke to feel comfortable and at ease with their roles and the Holmes/Watson relationship before tackling this key story.

Just when they were ready to shoot the first show, "The Solitary Cyclist," the director, Paul Davies, dropped out. He had been offered the film of Kipling's *Kim*, with Peter O'Toole—an offer he obviously couldn't refuse—and this left Michael and the team with a problem. Paul Annett came to the rescue and took over the director's chair. Annett became one of the best and most reliable of directors on that first series.

Michael Cox's own personal favorite from those first shows is "The Dancing Men." "I thought it was particularly well cast, and the working out of the code on the blackboard was cleverly scripted by Anthony Skene. I am fond of the location, too: Cubitt's house as featured in the film is just the right size for a man of his standing and wealth. At times I thought we overdid the opulence, when we used the splendid big houses near the studio, like Tatton Park."

I asked Michael about Brett's input to the series. "It was tremendous! He did question everything

about Holmes. He asked if we had to do the conventional cap and curly-pipe image. He as much as anyone on the production team urged us to go back to the text. He was a great source of energy on that. He researched the various pipes—the clay one and the cherrywood, etc. to make sure he smoked the right one in each story." At this point, Michael paused, a smile on his lips. "But I have to tell you: Jeremy was not mad about the deerstalker."

I made the point that later shows, ones in which he had no hand, have fewer scenes set in Baker Street than in those early episodes. Michael nodded. "Even on the first series, it was often a battle to include those scenes. Directors would say, 'Oh, my God, not another of those there's-one-thing-I-don't-understand-Mr.-Holmes set-ups in Baker Street!' I said, 'Yes!' I knew they were difficult to cope with, and it was hard to bring a freshness to the situation; however, they are what the audience expects, and they are, in some cases, the best way of telling the story. I had to dig my heels in and say, 'No, we can't film that in a pub down the road or other visually interesting but highly inappropriate places!'"

Sadly, after Michael's departure, there was perhaps too little of the digging in of heels attitude in the very late episodes. Jeremy Brett has said to me on more than one occasion that, to ensure that he was getting it right, he relied on Conan Doyle and Michael Cox.

Uncut and unedited! *Sherlock Holmes* on Video! See Page 89!

# IN SEARCH OF PHILO VANCE

by Paul M. Jensen

If America had the respect for its own cultural heritage that Britain has for its, there would already be a Philo Vance detective series on television, giving Sherlock Holmes a run for his money. Instead, Vance languishes in relative obscurity—generally unread, casually dismissed, and widely misunderstood.

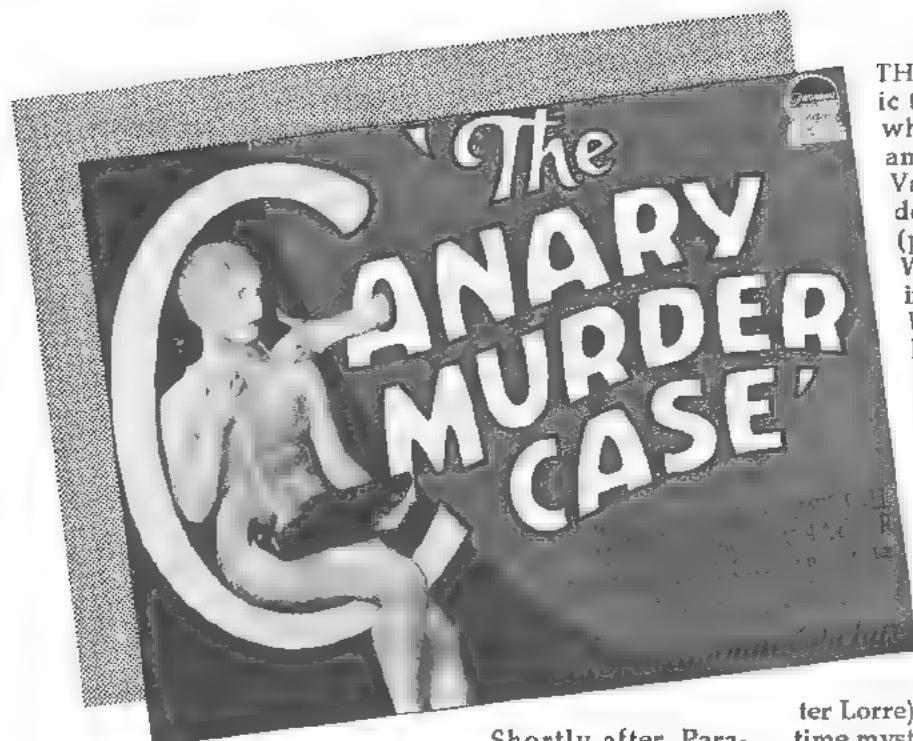
Vance and his murder cases appear in a series of 12 novels, published from 1926 through 1939, and 15 feature films, released from 1929 through 1947. Willard Huntington Wright wrote the books in the guise of "S. S. Van Dine," Vance's close friend and legal advisor who, by telling the stories, functions as his Watson. Although Agatha Christie and Dorothy L. Sayers were already established in England before Wright entered the field, the first Philo Vance novels—their approach and certainly their vast popularity—paved the way for such American masters as Ellery Queen, Rex Stout, and John Dickson Carr.

Philo Vance and those who followed his lead made the 1930s the classic detective story's Golden Age. However, starting as early as 1929, even many who read the books dismissed Vance as merely "irritating," an accurate but seriously incomplete response that misses much of what the novels contain. Vance and his methods of investigation cannot be so easily classified, for they embody an intriguing set of contrasts and combinations, some deliberate and some unconscious.

*The Benson Murder Case*, about the death of a stock-broker, was well-received in 1926. The "Canary" Murder Case, a 1927 best seller, had Vance investigate the killing of a notorious singer. The detective's popularity continued to grow with *The Greene Murder Case* (1928), which featured the deaths of several members of a family, and *The Bishop Murder Case* (1929), which linked a series of murders with nursery rhymes. Although 1930's *The Scarab Murder Case* also sold well, a critical backlash caused Wright to stop writing a book each year.

Early in 1928, Paramount optioned the rights to the first three Vance books and cast William Powell as the detective. THE CANARY MURDER CASE appeared in 1929, followed by THE GREENE MURDER CASE the same year. Then MGM released THE BISHOP MURDER CASE (1930), with Basil Rathbone as Vance.





Shortly after, Paramount's THE BENSON MURDER CASE (also 1930) appeared, followed in the same month by an all-star revue, PARAMOUNT ON PARADE, which included a six-minute mystery spoof ("Murder Will Out") teaming Powell's Vance with Sherlock Holmes (Clive Brook) and Fu Manchu (Warner Oland).

By 1930, as *Variety* noted in its review of BENSON, "the public reaction is against the school of guess-who," and no studio optioned *The Scarab Murder Case*. So Wright provided Warner Bros. with the plots for 12 short, non-Vance mysteries, released in 1931-32. He also bred Scottish terriers and tropical fish, and worked those hobbies into his next two Vance novels, *The Kennel Murder Case* and *The Dragon Murder Case* (both published in 1933). His interest in gambling provided the background for *The Casino Murder Case* (1934) and *The Garden Murder Case* (1935). During this period, new detectives gradually eclipsed Vance in popularity, and, when *The Kidnap Murder Case* reached bookstores in 1936, sales were disappointing.

By 1933, William Powell had become a Warner Bros. star, so that studio purchased the rights to *Kennel* and *Dragon*. Powell reappeared as Vance in THE KENNEL MURDER CASE (1933), but then moved to MGM, which almost immediately cast him in Dashiell Hammett's THE THIN MAN (1934), the trailer for which showed Powell as Nick Charles telling Powell as Philo Vance about his case. Warners adapted by assigning Warren William the role of Vance in THE DRAGON MURDER CASE (1934); it then dropped the character and cast William in a series of Perry Mason films. Expecting to carry on the Vance tradition, MGM purchased *Casino* and *Garden*, but Powell resisted playing the part again, so Paul Lukas starred in THE CASINO MURDER CASE (1935) and Edmund Lowe in THE GARDEN MURDER CASE (1936).

No studio ever bought *The Kidnap Murder Case*, but neither Vance nor Wright was ready to fade from the scene. Paramount's British division finally filmed THE SCARAB MURDER CASE in 1936, with Wilfrid Hyde-White portraying Vance, and Paramount cast newcomer Grant Richards in a low-budget remake of

THE GREENE MURDER CASE with the generic title NIGHT OF MYSTERY (1937). Now somewhat desperate for work, Wright accepted Paramount's invitation to provide a plot teaming Vance with comedienne Gracie Allen, which he developed into *The Gracie Allen Murder Case* (published in 1938). The film version, with Warren William returning as Vance, appeared in 1939. A suggestion by 20th Century Fox that Wright do the same for skating star Sonja Henie led to his final book, *The Winter Murder Case*, which was published in 1939, the year its author died. Also in 1939, Warners remade THE KENNEL MURDER CASE as CALLING PHILo VANCE (released in 1940), with James Stephenson as the detective.

In 1942, Fox bought the right to use the Philo Vance character from the author's estate and announced plans to film an original story by Leonard Hoffman called "The Four Star Murder Case." This would have teamed Vance (Warren William) with Charlie Chan (Sidney Toler), Mr. Moto (Peter Lorre), and Michael Shayne (Lloyd Nolan) in a wartime mystery, "with Mr. Moto, who went into retirement after Pearl Harbor, helping out the government from a Jap internment camp" (*New York Times*, August 16, 1942). No such film materialized. Wright's biographer, John Loughery, claims that the Sonja Henie book reached the screen (in much altered form) in 1941 as SUN VALLEY SERENADE, but on August 25, 1942, the *New York Times* reported that Fox still "owns Van Dine's last novel, *The Winter Murder Case*."

CALLING PHILo VANCE marked the last appearance of the "authentic" Vance. However, the popularity of hard-boiled private eyes in such films as MURDER, MY SWEET (1944) and THE BIG SLEEP (1946) prompted producer Howard Welsch to revive and reconstruct Vance as a tough contemporary investigator, played by William Wright in PHILo VANCE RETURNS and by Alan Curtis in PHILo VANCE'S GAMBLE and PHILo VANCE'S SECRET MISSION. PRC released all three films in 1947, but this version of Vance was totally unrecognizable.

Wright's novels fit the traditional puzzle style, which emphasizes the detective's eccentric personality. Philo Vance—with his esoteric knowledge, his confident command of deductive reasoning, his abrasive and emotionless personality, and his friendship with the story's more conventional narrator—is clearly a transposition of Sherlock Holmes to then-contemporary Manhattan, a fact that eager readers rapidly deduced. To these traditional elements, Wright added wealth and his own obsession with art history.

He describes Vance as 34 years old and "just under six feet, slender, sinewy, and graceful," with "chiselled regular features" and a mouth that suggests "both cruelty and asceticism." Vance smokes imported Régie cigarettes and dresses in a fashionably correct, yet unobtrusive, way—except at breakfast, when he wears a silk kimono and sandals. Outside his East 38th Street apartment, he often dons a hat and gloves and carries a malacca cane. His friendship with John F.-X. Markham, District Attorney of New York County, leads him to the center of challenging murder cases.

Vance's "insatiable mind" is "avid for knowledge," especially about art, literature, and music. He

peppers his conversation with references to Bach concertos, Cezanne watercolors, Petronius' *Satyricon*, George Grosz' drawings, Beethoven's C minor Symphony, and Georgia O'Keeffe's paintings. Even in the midst of an investigation, he attends an occasional concert or art exhibit. At times, Vance flaunts his knowledge at length. In *The Benson Murder Case*, he discourses on patience for a page and a half, quoting seven authors from Shakespeare to Cervantes, including one in French and two in Latin (without translations). This tendency bores or frustrates his friends, and usually does the same for the reader.

Vance dislikes noise and disorder, monotony, and rising before noon. He detests stupidity even more than vulgarity and bad taste. Although he holds himself "severely aloof from the common world of men," he is "keenly interested in all human reactions; but it was the interest of the scientist, not the humanitarian." He is a distant, ironic "spectator of life."

Vance's manner of speech also sets him apart from the common run of humanity. He has a slight English accent; he drops the final "G" from some words ("fascinatin'") and omits an occasional vowel ("in comp'rable") from others. He uses such words as "repine," "inspissated," "ebullition," and "predaceous" and employs such elaborate phrasing as "Excuse me while I seek habiliments suitable to the occasion" and "I crave enlightenment." Such mannerisms would make him seem insufferably superior, except that his ironic overstatement hints at a deliberate, tongue-in-cheek quality.

In general, Vance appears detached and supercilious. During conversations, he listens with "drowsy inattention" or "bored apathy." He might stifle a yawn or "placidly" smoke a cigarette. When he speaks, it is "carelessly" or in an "emotionless drawl," except when he assumes an "air of gushing credulousness" or "cynical amusement." While Markham or Sergeant Heath questions suspects, Vance gazes out a window unconcernedly, or saunters, "with apparent aimlessness, about the room, looking at the various articles and . . . pieces of furniture." Thinking aloud, he sprawls in a chair, gazing "dreamily" at the ceiling or "lazily" inspecting the tip of his cigarette. He exudes a smug self-confidence, as when he tells the struggling Markham, "The matter could be settled quietly in five minutes with a bit of intelligent thinking."

Vance's manner is perceived by others, including many readers, as condescension or "lazy indifference," but this response misses much of what Wright suggests about the man's nature. Often, there is an implied contrast between Vance's surface aloofness and his inner self. Van Dine's long experience with Vance allows him to note this difference. For example, Vance's deliberate way of selecting a cigarette or of flicking its ash reveals "evidence of repressed inner excitement." On one occasion, Van Dine notes that the detective's "eyes were boring into the man, though his voice retained its casual intonation." Whenever Vance seems to pay no atten-

tion to what others are saying, he is in fact absorbing and processing all that goes on around him.

When Vance himself questions suspects, he adapts his manner to the personality involved. He is, by turns, casually pleasant and sternly implacable; his tone might convey "innocent expectancy" or "the confident air of one who has no doubt whatever as to another's exact knowledge." His strictly controlled voice and expressions create a conscious contrast to whatever is happening inside.

On a personal level, Vance sets up a barrier between himself and others, and does not drop it even with friends. According to Van Dine, he "seemed always ashamed of any outward show of feeling, and sought constantly to repress his emotions." His friends understand and accept this defensiveness.

On one occasion, after Markham admits that Vance is right on a major point and thanks him, the detective walks "indifferently" to a window and looks out. "I am happy to learn," he says, "that you are capable of accepting such evidence as the human mind could not possibly





LEFT: Before gaining stardom as one of the screen's great comic actresses, Jean Arthur was the ingenue in THE GREENE MURDER CASE (1929). E. H. Calvert played DA Markham and William Powell—the future Nick Charles—was Philo Vance. RIGHT: Eugene Pallette plays Sergeant Heath to E. H. Calvert's Markham.

deny." Markham ignores his friend's sarcasm and continues the conversation. Yet Vance is not as callous or Markham as masochistic as might appear, for Van Dine explains (more fully than usual) that "whenever either made a remark that bordered on generosity, the other answered in a manner which ended all outward show of sentiment."

Wright rarely makes this sort of thing explicit, and many readers miss the implications, picking up only the surface elements. As a rule, the more serious the subject and intense the situation, the more Vance feigns indifference and complacency, so his manner contrasts with the basic tone of a scene in a way that contains subtle drama. Wright is perhaps not a skilled enough author to make this work as well as it might, but sensitive filmmakers could create some highly intriguing overtones by following the novels' suggestions. However, instead of coming to terms with the fact that Vance's manner does not entirely reflect his inner self, the makers of the various Vance films often forgo the challenge and simply eliminate Vance's eccentric manner

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Having played the character in four features, William Powell is the actor most closely identified with Philo Vance. Equipped with hat, gloves, and cane, he easily evokes Vance's elegant dignity, but, although his lazy eyelids readily convey languid indifference, he rarely has the opportunity to present that aspect.

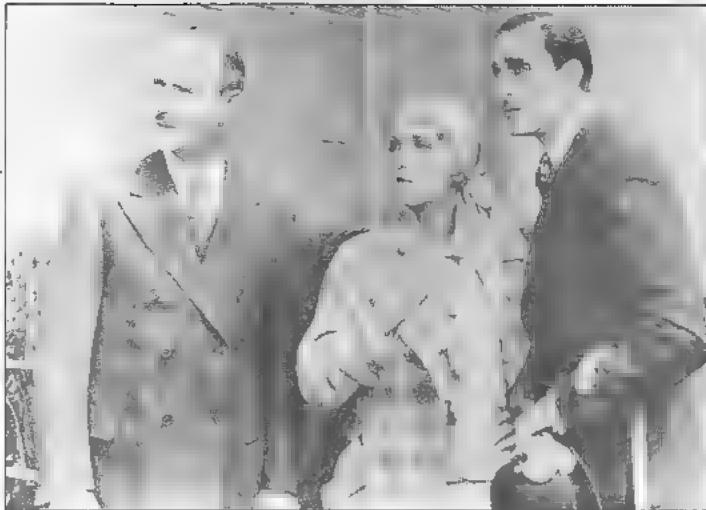
In THE CANARY MURDER CASE, dialogue delivery suffers from the overly careful diction and long pauses that characterize early talkies. This affects Powell less than many other actors, but even he doesn't vary his vocal tone much beyond a suave pleasantness. Overall, this Vance is just a distant cousin of the novels' detective. Partly to blame are changes in the plot that make him a close friend of Charles Spottswoode (Charles Lane), who turns out to be the killer. Because of this friendship, Vance is reassuringly sympathetic to Spottswoode and to Jimmie (James Hall), his son, and Alice La Fosse (Jean Arthur), Jimmie's pretty fiancée, two prime suspects. Such undermining of Vance's ability to act superior, skeptical, and objective severely limits Powell's characterization.

Today, viewers associate William Powell with charm and comedy, but that was not the case in 1929. As *Variety* pointed out in its review of CANARY, "A year ago Powell was the meanest and most treacherous villain in films." Therefore, contemporary moviegoers probably perceived the actor quite differently than we do, and his performance in CANARY might to them have had a harder edge.

In THE GREENE MURDER CASE, Vance wears a kimono in his first scene and later sports an unexpected pair of large, round glasses. His personality, however, remains as limited as in CANARY. Not until THE BENSON MURDER CASE did Paramount take the time to present a reasonably distinctive Vance, and Powell seizes the opportunity. When Markham says that a female suspect he was questioning seemed upset, Vance quips, "I don't wonder! You barked at her. You shouldn't bark at the ladies, old man." Markham responds, "You're more flippant than usual, today," to which Vance airily replies, "Well, this was a particularly flippant murder." Later, when Heath and Markham plan to arrest the wrong person, Vance declares, "I'm not going to let you make fools of yourselves!" At another point, an irritated Markham snaps, "Be careful somebody doesn't murder you."

In one noteworthy scene, Heath discusses the case while Vance finishes dressing. After telling the Sergeant that he spent the night "in meditation," Vance starts to select a tie. "I'm afraid the blue in that is going to clash," he says. "Blue, Sergeant, is a very tricky color, you know. In spite of its commonness, it's quite difficult—oh, that's anomalous, of course." Later, Heath reports some new developments as Vance's art dealer displays several Japanese prints. This scene neatly blends Vance's interest in art (he notes the "delicacy of line") with the investigation. Ultimately, he buys a Hiroshige print for \$3,000.

Powell reveals his sensitivity to the character when Heath, surprised to find Vance in a suspect's apartment, says, "Oh, you're here." Vance replies, "Yes, Sergeant—I'm here," and the actor gives this simple line a lightly ironic tone that acknowledges Heath's statement of the obvious. Director Frank Tuttle also contributes to the characterization: During one of Markham's interrogations, Tuttle cuts to a shot



LEFT: Basil Rathbone—the future Sherlock Holmes, need we mention?—took over the role of Philo Vance in 1930's *THE BISHOP MURDER CASE*. Clarence Geldert played DA Markham and the heroine was Leila Hyams. RIGHT: Philo Vance takes the police for a ride in *THE BISHOP MURDER CASE*.

of Vance on the sidelines, but—in contrast to a shot in *CANARY* of Vance sitting straight up and concentrating—this time Vance looks bored and turns to gaze out a window, with a raised eyebrow and a superior smile.

Made three years later, *THE KENNEL MURDER CASE* marks a regression in terms of Vance's character. Powell still looks elegant, smokes his cigarettes with aplomb, and seems to know something about Scottish terriers and Chinese porcelain, but otherwise he is more a generic gentleman detective than he was in *BENSON*. Relaxed and natural, he questions suspects and talks with friends in a consistently reserved but friendly manner. (Actually, Powell's acting in the *PARAMOUNT ON PARADE* skit makes one wish he had exaggerated a bit more in the serious films, for only in that brief parody does he convey Vance's smug confidence.)

Compared to Powell's version of Vance, Basil Rathbone's performance in *THE BISHOP MURDER CASE* feels like a sudden gust of icy air. His body is tight and his stare intense. He spits out his words with precise, artificial politeness. His tone of voice, though never sympathetic or even pleasant, varies considerably: He is stern when questioning a suspect, petulant when Markham wants to take action prematurely, and coolly insincere when he says "Oh, I see" as if thinking about something else.

The scriptwriters give Rathbone plenty of evocative dialogue. When one of the suspects, Sigurd Arnesson (Roland Young), asks to help on the case, Vance sarcastically agrees: "I really don't see any reason why Mr. Arnesson shouldn't apply his—uh, 'scientific knowledge'—to this crime." Later, told that a certain suspect is probably not guilty, he says, with impatient irony, "Oh, yes—yes. I'm sure of it. But we mustn't hurt his feelings by neglecting him." After Arnesson expresses admiration for Ibsen's plays, Vance calculatedly skewers the man by calling the author "a genius of a high order—but I think he has his superiors." Rathbone's Vance projects a sardonic superiority that feels ominous, even threatening. He is at his gentlest when Heath jumps to an erroneous conclusion: "Sergeant, you're much too trusting for this deceitful world. If everything happened as neatly as that, life would be very simple—and, uh, very dull."



*BISHOP* grants viewers two glimpses of Vance at home. We first meet him having breakfast on his apartment's patio. After Markham phones about the case, Vance gives crisp, efficient directions to his butler: "Dark suit. Dark hat. Dark tie. And—bring me some more hot coffee." Later, we find him playing Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker" on the piano.

Rathbone captures the disdainful, even angry, intelligence of Vance, but does not try to convey the man's casual side. Nor are there any contrasts between his outer and inner selves; the manner is the man. Powell's Vance is likeable, but rarely interesting as a person, whereas Rathbone's is neither likeable nor interesting, but he is impressive. To create a truly complex Vance, an actor would have to blend the separate qualities brought to the role by Powell and Rathbone.

Everyone concerned with *THE DRAGON MURDER CASE* seems unaware of, or uninterested in, the Philo Vance of the books. The character is given no distinctive dialogue or action and no personality traits, other than a mention that he used to breed exotic fish and a brief shot of him wearing a kimono in the morning. Warren William, left on his own, adds no vocal or physical mannerisms. William is thoroughly bland, just moving from point A to point B and speaking the words. In *THE KENNEL MURDER CASE* the previous year, Powell had at least been a generic gentleman detective; William, in *DRAGON*, is a generic detective, period.

It isn't that William gives a bad performance—he isn't awkward or unconvincing. He just doesn't give any performance at all! Curiously, in *THE CASE OF THE HOWLING DOG* (released later the same year) and three sequels, he played lawyer/detective Perry Mason with flair and vitality. (In general, Warners appears much more committed to the Mason series than to what they knew was their last Vance film.)

William reappeared as Vance five years later, in *THE GRACIE ALLEN MURDER CASE*, which emphasized the often unfunny comedy of Miss Allen. Ironically, here the writers had to create some sense of Vance's confidence and dignity, so that the comedienne could undercut it. His entrance establishes the character's vanity (though in a distinctly non-Vance way) when he offers some newspaper photog-



LEFT: THE KENNEL MURDER CASE (1933) was the best of the Vance films. William Powell returned as Vance, with Mary Astor and Paul Cavanaugh in fine support. RIGHT: The secretary (Ralph Morgan), the butler (Arthur Hohl), the detective (Powell), the cop (Eugene Pallette), and the DA (Robert McWade) find a corpse.

rathers his "good side," and his dialogue is slightly elaborate. ("Surely, Mr. Brown, you can explain the migratory habits of your own cigarette case.") In fact, someone must have been aware of the literary Vance, for on two occasions William even drops a "G"!

Most of William's characterization emerges in response to Gracie's irrationality. After he explains something and she says, "I see," he mutters, "I doubt it," and when she declares that something is "too cute for words," he responds, "Good. Then let's not have any." He endures being called "Fido" with patient fortitude, but the physical indignity of being squirted in the face with a water pistol provokes wide-eyed fury. In the climax, Gracie saves Vance from smoking a poisoned cigarette by hitting him in the head with her purse. "Gosh, I'm glad I hit you!" she blurts. "I'm glad you find it fun," he responds dryly, making the most of one of the film's more carefully phrased lines. Vance survives such encounters without becoming a buffoon, and it is pleasant to find him at least partially recognizable, but the film as a whole is more energetic than entertaining.

At first glance, THE CASINO MURDER CASE has everything against it: Hungarian-born Paul Lukas plays Vance, the character is involved in a romance, and MGM tried to recreate the comic banter that had made THE THIN MAN a hit the year before. Yet the finished product evokes the detective's personality surprisingly well. The writers establish that Vance is trying, without complete success, to change his ways. Thus, they can humanize him without dropping his pomposness and erudition. Once the viewer adjusts to a European-sounding Vance, even Lukas' accent becomes an advantage, setting the character apart from others in a useful and efficient way.

In the first scene, we discover Vance fencing with his butler, Currie (Eric Blore)—a skill mentioned in one of the books. "Since you've gone in for exercise, you're a changed man," remarks Currie. Vance jokingly points his blade at him and demands, "For the better, I hope?" "Yes, sir. Yes—much better," Currie replies. "In fact, you've become quite human."

Having established its premise, the film then presents the more traditional Vance. Attending an auction, he winces at a large, ugly statue of a cupid. Vance buys it, then has it smashed. When asked why,

he asserts, "Because a man who destroys a monstrosity like this does more for art than the man who creates a masterpiece!" This line is very much in the spirit of the literary Vance, with its implied confidence in his own artistic judgment, and the elegant Lukas speaks it with charming arrogance.

The film's leading female character, Doris Reed, is both intelligent and down-to-earth, a combination which actress Rosalind Russell conveys winningly. She tells Vance that she has read the books about his cases and liked them, but "they're a trifle long-winded in spots." Almost immediately he describes the current case as "a macabre symphony of cacophonous discords" and compares it to the music of Debussy, then corrects the reference to Stravinsky. At this, Doris winces and says that's how he talks in the books. "Of course," she adds, "I always skipped those parts."

In a later scene, Vance compares the case to a painting. "This whole affair puzzles me.... This shooting in the middle of a poison mystery, it's out of-drawing, just like a few brush strokes by Picasso in the center of an Andrea del Sarto Pietà." Then he catches himself, glances at Doris, and says, "All right, I'll skip it." Vance also listens to Liszt's "Les Preludes" on the radio (though Doris would prefer Ted Lewis) and prepares eggs chinoise.

By letting Vance slip into his old ways, the film provides us with a taste of the traditional character, while making it palatable through Doris' teasing and Vance's self consciousness. The compromise works because it is not inherently disrespectful to the detective. Only occasionally does CASINO veer too far into THIN MAN territory, as when Doris tells Vance his apartment is a "nice little hut" and he replies, "I built it myself out of palm leaves." Such banter, while amusing, is a bit too light for even the changed Vance.

According to Wright's biographer, the novelist disliked MGM's addition of romance and humor, and didn't bother to see CASINO when it was released. Still, the film must have had a greater effect on Wright than he acknowledged, for in his next book, *The Garden Murder Case*, he has Vance attracted to the feisty Zalia Graem, who knows about his career and teases him about his manner. "You are terribly stingy with your G's," she says, and quotes Ogden Nash's couplet, "Philo Vance / Needs a kick in the pance."

adding, "I'm beginning to think that maybe Ogden Nash had the right idea."

MGM's film version of *Garden* tries to recreate the style of CASINO, but this time the balance is off. Our encounters with the "true" Vance are brief and superficial: He corrects Markham's grammar ("who" should be "whom") and uses the word "syllogism," but that's about it. When Vance asks about a certain character, Markham replies that he owns "the second largest conceit in the world." Vance responds, "The first belongs to me? We should be better acquainted." The two men chuckle at this, so, although Vance's conceit is mentioned, it isn't illustrated.

Edmund Lowe, as Vance, tries to seem urbane by holding his wine glass by the stem and sipping carefully, but he can't help but convey the good-humored earthiness of a man who sings in the shower. ("The Man on the Flying Trapeze," not an operatic aria.) In a blatant attempt to evoke the cute comedy of Asta, the dog in THE THIN MAN, Vance here has a dachshund that is discovered in one of his twin beds. He teases the dog about the Scottie down the street, at which the embarrassed animal puts its head under the covers. Vance chuckles affectionately. Yes, in KENNEL Vance expressed fondness for his Scottie ("If someone were to try to kill Captain MacTavish, I'd probably turn murderer myself"), but he wouldn't have indulged in this kind of sentimental nonsense.

The script also includes some misguided attempts to humanize Vance. Because Zalia Graem (Virginia Bruce) is a suspect, his attraction to her makes things awkward for the writers. She asks if people ever fool him. "Up here," he answers, pointing to his head, but "never down here," he adds, pointing to his heart. Said with sincerity, this goes completely against Philo Vance's grain. Yes, he might respond to feelings, but no, he wouldn't place emotions over the intellect. In fact, Vance does worry that Zalia might be guilty, which leads to one of his more successful character-oriented scenes: "Why did you push that woman off the bus?" he demands, advancing on her. "Why did you? Why did you?" he repeats. "I didn't," she blurts out, distressed. They pause, then embrace. This is a nice moment, because it includes ruthless skepticism and reveals their emotion through glances and facial expressions, not words. One could imagine Vance behaving this way.

The British film, THE SCARAB MURDER CASE, remains unseen, but the casting of a young Wilfrid Hyde-White as Vance offers interesting possibilities. Grant Richards, who played the role in NIGHT OF MYSTERY, is also elusive, but Variety said he "has a pleasing personality" and "a manner which will land him sympathy," whatever that means. More recently,

William K. Everson wrote in *The Detective in Film* (Citadel, 1972) that Richards is "facially acceptable" but projects "a kind of insincerity which made him much better fitted for weakling or villain roles."

In CALLING PHILO VANCE, British-born James Stephenson reveals no colorful eccentricities as Vance, but his serene intensity, resonant voice, and handsome but slightly harsh features provide a steady, patrician presence. He acts politely confident and a bit above it all, but never to the point of haughtiness or condescension; even his more spontaneous moments possess a self-controlled, serious quality. Proven right about something, he raises an eyebrow and smiles with benevolent satisfaction. Reacting to a doctor's "oh, oh," he asks, "Found something disturbing?" but Stephenson's unsurprised delivery makes the line as much a statement as a question. He adapts his manner slightly when talking to Hilda Lake (Margot Stevenson), so that such straightforward lines as "Thought I should find you here" sound smooth, almost seductive, and he flatteringly manipulates her into giving information. ("That's a most attractive shade of lipstick you have. What is it?")

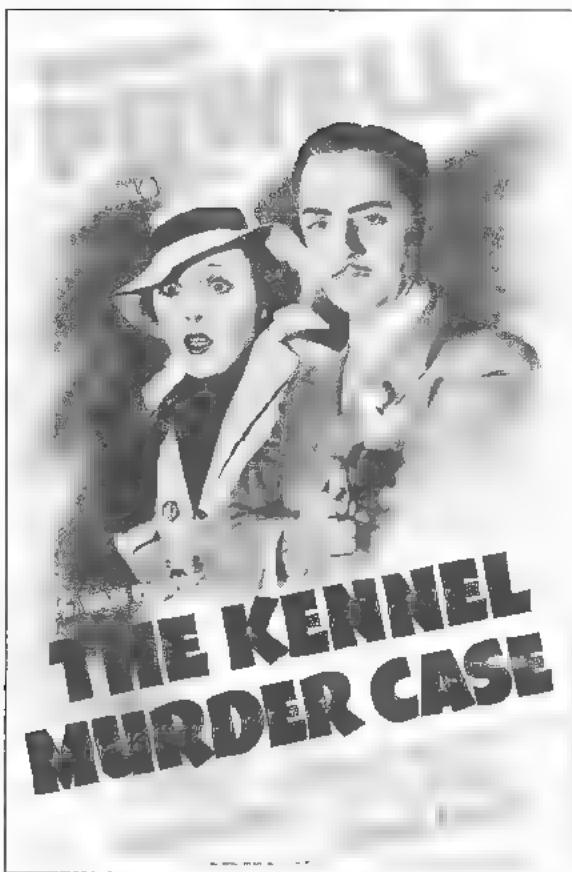
In contrast to Stephenson, the two actors who play Vance in the three 1947 films seem especially out of place. William Wright and Alan Curtis are interchangeably, uninterestingly tough private eyes, road-company Philip Marlowes of plebeian insensitivity and no real personality. They serve only as distracting footnotes to the cinematic career of a complex detective, interlopers who borrowed his name and nothing else.

\*\*\*

As created by Willard Huntington Wright, Philo Vance fits neatly into the pattern of a traditional detective, but with some original aspects. Wright

also used the classic type of puzzle plot, but again with significant variations. This kind of story presents, with almost scientific rigor, the resolution of a seemingly insoluble problem through the use of keen observation and logical deduction. Its plot consists of two carefully contrived sets of events, developed simultaneously: the actions of the criminal, which occurred before the story's start, and those of the detective as he uncovers the criminal's actions and, ultimately, his identity. The result is a kind of intellectual game in which the mind of the murderer challenges that of the detective while the author matches wits with the reader. Inherently optimistic, the puzzle format assumes the power of the intellect to resolve all mysteries.

Unfortunately, the author usually concentrates so hard on his complex plot that the characters become



# Book Ends

## The Scarlet Street Review of Books

### SPIDER-MAN: THE VENOM FACTOR

Diane Duane

Byron Preiss/Putnam, 1995

348 pages—\$19.95

### THE ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN

Stan Lee, Editor

Byron Preiss, 1995

347 pages—\$12.00

1995 is shaping up to be the year of the Spider—as in *Spider-Man*. The Web Slinger is currently swinging onto bookshelves via two new releases from Putnam.

The first book, *Spider-Man: The Venom Factor*, by Diane Duane, has two villains for the price of one. Not only must our wall-crawling hero face the evil Hobgoblin and his pumpkin bombs, but Venom—that black-clad monster with a set of razor teeth that could make a shark envious—is also back in town.

Venom was last seen in San Francisco, where he gave up his evil ways to protect a colony of homeless people. So why does he show up in New York City, killing innocents while rampaging through the subways and underworld of the Big Apple? And why is the Hobgoblin stealing components for what appears to be an atom bomb?

Duane, best known for her excellent *Star Trek* novels, does a marvelous job fleshing out Spider-Man's world in prose form. The story moves at a furious pace, with the same humor and excitement that one expects from a Spidey comic, and the added plus that Duane expertly makes full use of the characterization and detail that can only be found in a novel. This gives the story an epic scope, as if it were a *Spider-Man* tale that was too big to be told in a comic book.

With artwork by Ron Lim, *Spider-Man: The Venom Factor* is an enjoyable romp with plenty of action and suspense. Hopefully, this is the first of a series.

*The Ultimate Spider-Man* is a collection of 12 short stories starring the Wall Crawler. Expecting nothing more than comics in prose form, this anthology is pleasantly surprising. These tales are extremely well

written, offering insight into Spidey and those whose lives he touches.

Stan Lee teams up with Peter David for the first story, simply called "Spider-Man." This novella recounts, with great style, how Peter Parker first got his amazing powers. "Suits," by Tom De Haven and Dean Wesley Smith, chronicles a crisis of faith early in Spidey's career. Peter Parker, on a trip to Atlantic City with Aunt May, has second thoughts about being a superhero. Then he has a chance meeting with a crimefighter from an earlier era. "Cool," by Lawrence Watt Evans, takes a chilling, hard look at hero worship through the eyes of a fumbling 14-year-old boy.

The title of "Radically Both," by Christopher Golden, comes from a line in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Curt Connors tries a serum that hopefully will give him complete control over his alter ego, the Lizard. Richard Lee Byers' "Thunder on the Mountain" is one of my favorites. Not only does the author take Spidey out of the city by having him track mercenaries in a rural area, but the entire story is told from the point of view of a young boy who has never even heard of *Spider-Man*, let alone seen him.

As if such good fiction wasn't enough, each story is superbly illustrated by such *Spider-Man* artists as Steve Ditko, John Romita, and Rick Leonardi. *The Ultimate Spider-Man* will stick with you.

—Sean Farrell

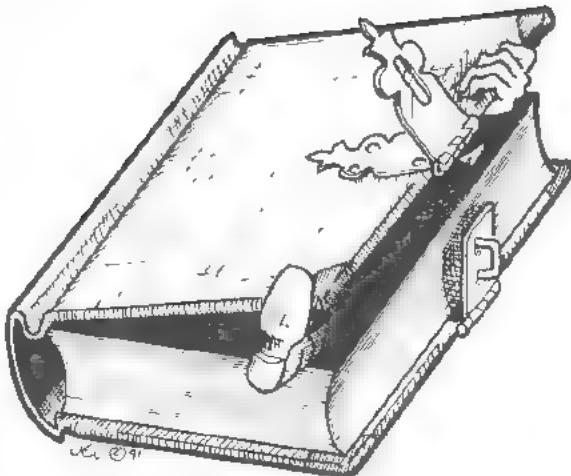
### YESTERDAY'S TOMORROWS

Bruce Lanier Wright

Taylor Publishing Co., 1993.

184 pages—\$19.95

As the prices of original Hollywood memorabilia spiral upwards, books of movie poster reproductions such as this are turning up with increasing frequency and quality. This offering by Bruce Lanier Wright con-



centrates on Hollywood's first science-fiction boom between 1950 and 1964 and includes poster art for 74 films. Unlike movie producers, who were stymied by inadequate budgets and Styrofoam special effects, poster illustrators were limited only by their own imaginations. Much of the spectacular artwork featured here rarely matched the often ordinary films which inspired it, but the posters have become warmly nostalgic, highly collectible pieces in their own right.

As Wright points out, classic posters were not strictly the domain of classic movies. Although such genre greats as *THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL* and *THE THING* (both 1951) receive their full due, they were often equaled or surpassed by the mesmerizing graphics of such submediocre movies as 1957's *INVASION OF THE SAUCER-MEN* (the one-sheet of which usually commands a whopping auction price of \$2000, sadly indicative of the mass insanity that has gripped the poster-collecting hobby in recent years). Wright's page-length commentaries critique the movies as well as the art, enabling *Yesterday's Tomorrows* to do double-duty as a film guide.

With its razor-sharp poster reproductions, all rendered in crisp, vivid colors, this handsome tome would have been a landmark work only a couple of years ago. Coming on the heels of Ron Borst's *Graven Images* (Grove Press, 1992, reviewed in *Scarlet Street* #10), the definitive and already legendary compilation of horror and science-fiction poster art, Wright's book may be seen as something of a redundancy. *Yesterday's Tomorrows'* saving grace is the author's wit. Writing knowledge-

ably, affectionately, and with common sense to spare, Wright's style is as friendly and inviting as a Motel 6 radio spot. His tips on poster collecting, pricing, and restoring are useful and extremely well-taken, and Wright has captured the charm and allure of the wonderful world of 50s science fiction about as well as anyone.

—Michael Brunas

**TALTOS**  
Anne Rice  
Alfred A. Knopf, 1994  
467 pages—\$25.00

*Taltos* is volume three in Anne Rice's epic, the *Lives of the Mayfair Witches*. *Lasher* and *Taltos* aren't sequels but continuations of *The Witching Hour*. *Taltos*, the most tightly written, should delight fans of the first two books, but will confuse readers unfamiliar with the series.

Though *Taltos* reads like horror, it's really sci-fi. The Mayfair witch clan has developed an extra set of chromosomes, with recessive genes that beget nonhuman Taltos in the highly inbred 13th generation. In the incestuous Mayfair clan, headquartered in Rice's own home town

of New Orleans, fathers breed with daughters, mothers with sons, brothers with sisters. One of the heroines, the 13-year-old nymphet witch and computer genius, Mona Mayfair, plays out with adult men (in graphic scenes reminiscent of Rice's pseudonymously published erotica) what the author only suggested with child-vampire Claudia in *Interview With the Vampire*.

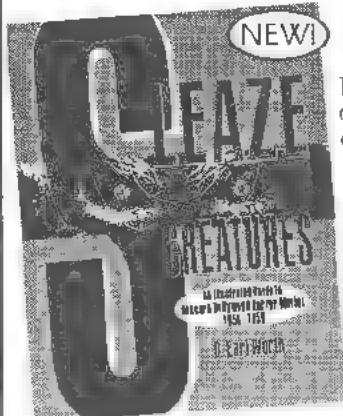
As "demons" (incorporeal but sentient entities), the Taltos can manipulate their witches by behaving as incubi. Once incarnated in flesh, members of this endangered species can become sexual predators, "born knowing," attaining adult size and function almost immediately after birth. In usually doomed attempts to reproduce (better accomplished with other Taltos), the worst of the young males suckle, seduce, and rape their human mothers repeatedly. Usually the witches drop dead of exhaustion or bleed to death miscarrying the fetuses, which develop at inhuman speed. A Taltos female hunting for compatible sperm depletes male humans, but with less drastic results. If allowed to breed out of control, this powerful race could soon out-compete human life on Earth.

However, Ashlar, aka Mr. Ash, the gentle Taltos hero of this story, has no desire to take over the world. He's learned to control himself... or so he hopes. This zillionaire owns a manufacturing empire, works in an office, and passes for human. Then he discovers the Mayfair witchlet, Mona, pregnant by an adult male witch with a fetus that develops abnormally fast....

Rice respects her audience. Rejecting the theory that genre novels are merely potato chips to malnourish the inferior brain, she communicates in a sophisticated style. Her phenomenal popularity forces editors to respect her wishes when she breaks other writers' rules. She writes from multiple points of view; she meanders through time and space; she digresses into subjects that interest her (such as the manufacturing of dolls); she even writes the dreaded "lumps of exposition" ("exposition" being the trendiest cuss word for the '90s among fiction publishers). She gets away with most of this, too: *Taltos* not only hit number one on the *Publisher's Weekly* bestseller list, it's a good book

—Lelia Loban

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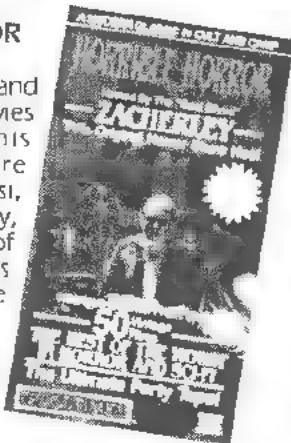
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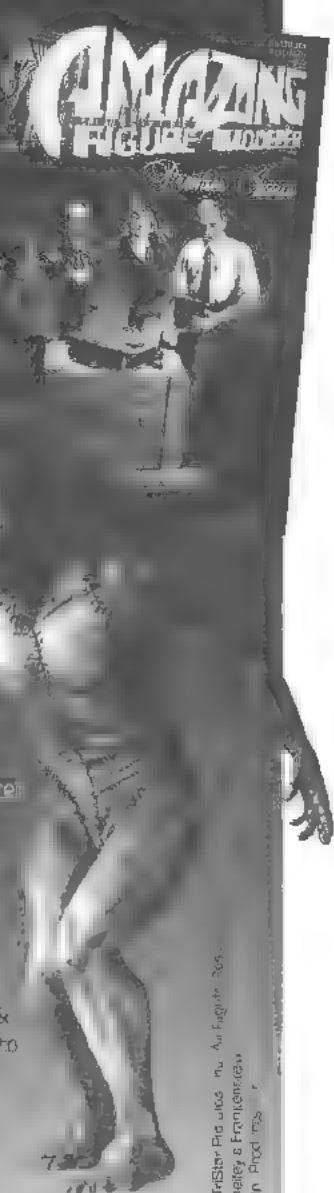
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## BLACK ZOO

Continued from page 70

BLACK ZOO bears more than a passing resemblance to the rarely seen, deliriously depraved pre-Code Paramount thriller, MURDERS IN THE ZOO (1933), which showcased Lionel Atwill at the height of his pop-eyed villainy. As Eric Gorman, a wealthy sportsman/zookeeper obsessed with his beautiful but faithless wife (Kathleen Burke), Atwill disposed of her suitors in a variety of cunning ways, making it appear that they were the victims of wild animals. In a delicious bit of irony, the animal kingdom had the last laugh when Gorman, fleeing the police, took refuge in the snake house and was crushed to death by a python. Though there can be no doubt that both Eric Gorman and BLACK ZOO's Michael Conrad are fanatics, their manias are of a decidedly different stripe: Gorman's insane jealousy and possessiveness is rooted in the pursuit of carnal pleasures. Conrad, on the other hand, answers a higher calling: the defense and protection of the animals he worships.

As Gough's put-upon spouse, Jeanne Cooper valiantly holds her own opposite the actor's full-throttled histrionics. (What begins as an edgy dinnertime conversation between the couple quickly degenerates into a screaming match, à la Ralph and Alice Kramden, culminating with the night's entrée splattered across the floor and a slap across Cooper's face.) Edna is the classic abused wife, madly in love with the man who emotionally (and physically) dominates her. Cooper, now a familiar fixture on daytime soaps (and the real-life mom of former L. A. LAW heartthrob Corbin Bernsen), had been up for an Emmy the previous year for her performance in an episode of TV's BEN CASEY.

## MR. BURROUGHS AND ME

Continued from page 81

rage Press after still another rewrite. It has since been reprinted in Japanese.

My relationship with Canaveral had remained active and extremely friendly as long as I lived in New York City. However, in the mid-'60s, I was transferred to Poughkeepsie by my employer. That meant a 90-mile drive any time I wanted to visit Biblio & Tannen's book shop instead of a 15-minute subway ride. Then, in 1970, I moved to the West Coast, and was forced to give up my connection with Canaveral Press altogether.

If Canaveral had been as successful as hoped, the Jacks might have replaced me and continued to produce books. Instead, they decided to shut down the operation, maintaining their stock until all the books were sold. Eventually they were, and today every Canaveral Press title is itself a collector's item. Perhaps the chief prize is *Tarzan and the Tarzan Twins* (1963), which was intended for younger readers and has never seen a paperback reprint.

My last visit to Biblio & Tannen's store in May of 1970 was a sad parting, and when I returned to New York on a research trip in 1976 I went to see them again.



Rod Lauren was BLACK ZOO's traditional teenage slave boy.

Although Rod Lauren possessed the broody good looks and pouty demeanor that teen idols of the day traded on, his career never took off; within a few years he was all but forgotten. Lauren enjoyed a brief success as a recording artist: His hit single, "If I Had a Girl", sold 800,000 copies, earning him guest spots on the Perry Como, Bob Hope, Ed Sullivan, and Dick Clark shows. But RCA Records and producer Hal Wallis, who put him under contract, quickly tired of his tirades and released him. As the mute Carl, rejected by his father because he saw too much, Lauren isn't bad; he fares particularly well in the emotion-charged confrontation scene. (Rather surprisingly, Carl doesn't regain his voice as one might expect in your average, neatly-wrapped denouement—not even to croon "If I Had a Girl.") Lauren's other genre credit was the ghastly sci-fi/horror quickie THE CRAWLING HAND (1963), in which he was demonically possessed by the severed hand of a dead astronaut.

Three of Hollywood's seasoned pros—Jerome Cowan, Virginia Grey, and Elisha Cook, Jr.—make brief but memorable appearances in BLACK ZOO. Grey, who had barely escaped the spine-crunching embrace of Rondo Hatton's Creeper in Universal's HOUSE OF HORRORS (1946) doesn't fare as well here; the immensely likeable blonde is bludgeoned to death by Gough's pet gorilla in one of the film's most brutally graphic moments.

Within the limited parameters of its goals, BLACK ZOO modestly achieves what it sets out to accomplish: It's a good old-fashioned exploitation shocker with a markedly sadistic slant. For Herman Cohen, one of the horror genre's most flamboyant showmen, it was all in a day's work.



Characteristically, Jack Tannen asked about my research project and gave me an important book I had not been able to find elsewhere.

David Garfunkel had died several years earlier. The last time I heard from Alice Ryter, she was living in Los Angeles operating an antiquarian book business. Jack Tannen later retired to Florida to become curator of a private library. And Jack Biblio is still living in Brooklyn, operating Biblio Books.

In 1977, when Harper & Row published my fantasy novel *Sword of the Demon*, I received a telephone call from a producer at radio station KPFA in Berkeley. They were planning a new program to be called PROBABILITIES UNLIMITED, a talk show devoted to science-fiction and fantasy. Would I appear on their inaugural broadcast, to talk about *Sword of the Demon*?

I agreed, and the show ran with good response. The producers asked me back several more times, then asked me to become a guest interviewer, and finally a permanent member of the program's staff. PROBABILITIES (the title was shortened before very long) has now been running for well over a decade, and has

Continued on page 102

## MR. BURROUGHS AND ME

*Continued from page 101*

become quite a fixture of the local literary community since we broadened our coverage from science-fiction to include mysteries and other literary forms.

Not long ago, on a program devoted to reviewing recent books, I attacked a paperback space opera as unworthy of having been published. One of my colleagues, Richard Wolinsky, challenged me. It's just a space opera, he asserted, and I was wrong to judge it as if it had been a serious novel.

I insisted that this was not the basis of my complaint. Space opera, or any other pulp form could still be written in valid English, not the garbled gunk that the book I'd reviewed was written in.

Wolinsky knows my fondness for many of the old pulp writers. "When did you last read Burroughs or Doc Smith?" he challenged me, over the air.

Before our next broadcast, I took down Burroughs' *The Moon Maid* (1926), Smith's *Grey Lensmen* (1951), and—for good measure—Lester Dent/Kenneth Robeson's *The Man of Bronze* from my bookshelf. I brought them to the studio and read the first sentences from each. The

three authors had different approaches to writing and very different styles, but all three were excellent. Three books anywhere from 40 to 60 years old, and all of them held up.

I don't regret the time I devoted to the pulps or to the pulp authors.

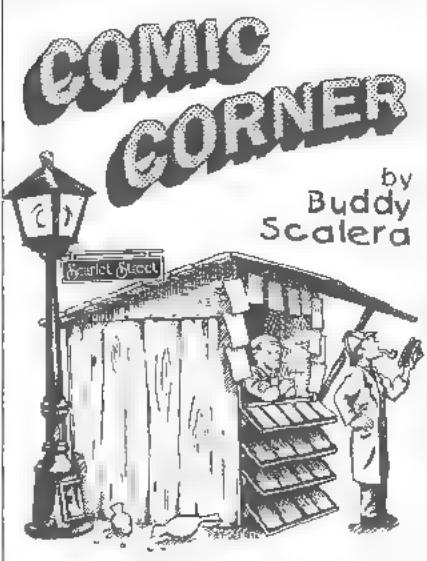
*This article originally appeared in Paperback Parade #10, December 1988.*

## CASTLE OF FRANKENSTEIN

*Continued from page 81*

Oh, Burroughs' procession of monsters is endless: Consider the Vargas of *The Moon Men* or the Kalkars of the same book; or the terrible primitive men of *The Cave Girl* (which might better be called *The Cave Man*, if the truth be told) or any one of a dozen others.

The world may know Edgar Rice Burroughs best for his creation of Tarzan—but millions of enthusiastic readers of science-fiction adventures, especially those who love their creatures on the unusual side, are devoted followers of ERB in this second, completely different field.



### X-CITED FOR X-FILES

Deep in the hearts of many Scarlet Streeters lurks the not-so-secret desire that THE X-FILES will survive well into eternity.

It's a wonderful television series that grips the imaginations of terrified viewers every Friday. Braver X-Philes are purported to even turn the lights out during the show, in order to enhance the general creepiness.

Though watching TV in the dark can sometimes be fun, reading comics that way is nigh impossible. And once you get your scarlet fingertips thumbing through the pages of Topps' X-Files comic book, you'll agree that it's well worth emerging from the darkness

to huddle under the reading light.

When THE X-FILES first hit the tube, fans raved about the basic concepts of the program. Sci-fi fans loved it simply because it was well-written.

If Topps can maintain the quality of the first *X-Files* comic, the company will doubtless have a similar hit on their hands. Written by Stephan Petrucha, *The X-Files* captures the energy and suspense characteristic of the TV series.

Petrucha is a self-professed X-Phile who knows Dana Scully and Fox Mulder as well as any of the show's scriptwriters. It is this level of writing that should bring many new buyers into stores to explore the comic universe.

However, the Scarlet Street jury is still out concerning the artwork by penciller Charles (*Mars Attacks!*) Adlard. Though Adlard is a skilled illustrator, his facial interpretations of Scully and Mulder often seem strained and clunky. He captures their body language, but up close each character appears overtly "comic-booky."

Still, *The X-Files* is a promising start to a promising series, and we urge all fans to read it. With the lights on, of course.

### Africa Screams

Dark Horse Comics have long been favorites here at Scarlet Street, due in large part to the sheer diversity of product that the company sends to the presses.

One of Dark Horse's latest releases is sure to thrill Edgar Rice Burroughs fans. Presented in illustrated-novel form, *Tarzan: The Lost Adventure* revives the tradition of story-telling that inspired the action-packed serials of yesteryear and the blockbuster movies of today.

*The Lost Adventure*, which is an actual unpublished manuscript by Burroughs, has been locked away incomplete since 1950, says Dark Horse.

Writer Joe R. Lansdale presents a passionate expansion of the original manuscript. The first part is complete with a cliffhanger ending. Black-and-white illustrations by Thomas Yeates offer a classic interpretation of Lord Greystoke.

The first issue of *The Lost Adventure* also includes John Coleman Burroughs' *John Carter of Mars* comic strip from the 1940s. The artist/writer of these United Features Syndicate Sunday strips was none other than ERB's own son!



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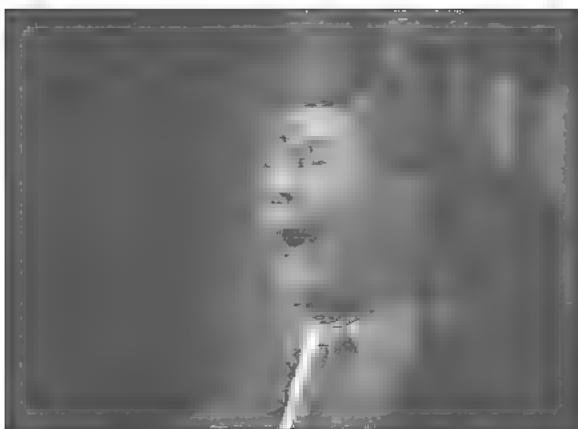
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LEFT: Michael Gough can't mask his horror at coming face to face with THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA (1962). BELOW LEFT: Gough played for high stakes against Joan Crawford in BERSERK (1967). Unfortunately, he won!



## MICHAEL GOUGH

Continued from page 46

and then everybody laughs!" "Terry! How are they gonna laugh?" "You wait, you'll see. Just cut there. They'll laugh."

*SS: What was it like to work with all those animals in BLACK ZOO?*

*MG: Oh, it was wonderful! It was absolutely wonderful! To begin with, I went out to this ranch where the animals came from and met the owner. He was as bold as brass. He said, "You can go in the cage with the lion any time you like, provided I'm there—but never if there's any food lying around. The cat will think you might be coming to take it away. Otherwise, if I'm there, you can go in and talk to them."*

*SS: That's amazing!*

*MG: You can actually pat them. I remember, there was a mountain lion*

showing off for some people. Well, I tried to put my hand in his mouth, and he wouldn't open it up. The owner gave him such a belt on the side of the head! I said, "Don't do that! I mean, you can't do that!" And he said, "Oh, don't worry. I can't hit him nearly as hard as his children or his wife hit him when they're playing. They hit each other much harder than I ever could."

*SS: How's that for family life?*

*MG: He said, "It's the mood that you hit him in. If I'm doing it in a towering rage, he'll get cross. But if I just hit him because he's not concentrating, he thinks, 'Oh, yes. I must concentrate.'" (Laughs) It's incredible! There's one scene that starts out with me playing the organ, and all the animals come in and sit down in chairs! That was the first time that all these animals*

lying down, asleep—this was just off the set—and I lay down on the floor with him as I'd been talking to him. I had my head on his tummy, on his chest. I was eating a sandwich. And he started purring! It was like a jungle fire going on right under my ear! I said, "Stop making that noise!" (Laughs)

*SS: You're a brave man! Lions aren't pillows!*

*MG: But they were wonderful. He was such a miraculous trainer. He was marvelous. In BLACK ZOO, when the animal leapt at a wretched person, whether it was a woman or a child or anyone, this guy dressed up and played the character—and he wrestled with these animals! At one point, I had to put my hand in the cat's mouth,*

had actually been on the set together. First time ever!

*SS: That's quite a scene, all right!*

*MG: The owner was a wonderful guy. He hated circuses, hated zoos, hated all those things. He'd say, "They're my friends." If you opened the door sometimes, there would be a big cat sitting in his car! (Laughs) A couple of times, for instance, we were driving along with a cat or two in the back. He'd open the back door, let them out, and they'd run beside the car. He'd say, "Look! We're doing nearly 60 miles per hour!" They were cheetahs.*

*SS: The fastest animals in the world, aren't they?*

*MG: Well, they were certainly zooming along!*

*SS: When you starred in horror films in the '60s, were you afraid that it might damage your reputation?*

*MG: No, I've never had a reputation to damage.*

*SS: Nonsense!*

*MG: It's true! I'm just a working actor, that's all.*

*SS: Well, you have a lot of fans who enjoy your work.*

*MG: You're very, very kind to say so.*

*SS: You've done everything from Shakespeare to being carried around by a giant gorilla.*

*MG: I'm very lucky, because I do theater and films and television and radio. I do occasional concerts, poetry readings, and so on. So one has a sort of wide range of things to work at. I don't have to worry, "Oh, if I do this it's going to damage my career." My career covers a broad canvas.*

*SS: Well, then, much luck with BAT-MAN FOREVER.*

*MG: Bless you.*

*SS: And thank you for your time.*

*MG: Thank you very much, indeed.*

Horror of Dracula! Berserk! Trog! The Skull!  
It's Michael Gough on Scarlet Street Video!  
See pages 22 and 23!

## HERMAN COHEN

Continued from page 67

**HC:** Joan couldn't stand Ty Hardin, and Ty Hardin couldn't stand Joan. You have to understand, I had to play games with Joan, because Joan thought she was still gorgeous, and every man wanted her. And Ty Hardin wasn't interested at all! And Judy Geeson was a young girl, and not disciplined. She'd just done TO SIR WITH LOVE with Sidney Poitier, and she was late, and Joan had to reprimand her a few times. Well, not a few times—one time and that was it. Judy started crying and they hugged and kissed and made up. Diana Dors and Joan? They loved each other. They got along great and told great stories and had fun. Diana Dors was a great gal! Parties at her home were unbelievable! (Laughs) But she was always taken by the men she fell in love with. They all took her money.

**JL:** For our money, TROG's best scene is its suspenseful opening with the three young men in the cave.

**HC:** The cave was built in Bray Studios in Windsor, England. Everyone thought it was a real cave, but it was a set.

**JL:** By this point, you had long ago come to a parting of the ways with American International, although they still released a few of your films. What caused the breakup?

**HC:** An asshole named Sam Arkoff. Jim Nicholson and I were close friends. Jim originally wanted me to

be his partner in AIP, which Sam always resented, but I couldn't do it because I had just signed a four picture deal with United Artists. So Sam was vice-president in charge of legal. Now, years later he thinks he produced my films! He thinks he produced Roger Corman's films! If you read his phony publicity—and you can quote me on any of this—he thinks he produced our pictures! I cannot tell you about all the legal letters and the calls! I mean, I threatened him; I said, "Sam, you do this one more time, you're gonna be in serious trouble!" "Oh! You've got my word, I promise!" And then he went to the Film Forum in New York last year, to an AIP retrospective, and sure enough, he said he produced I WAS A TEENAGE WEREWOLF! That he had signed Michael Landon! He produced Corman's MACHINE-GUN KELLY, starring Charles Bronson! He starred Jack Nicholson in LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS! But he didn't do any of this crap! (Laughs) I don't believe I called it crap!

**JL:** Whoops!

**HC:** He didn't do any of these pictures! (Laughs)

**JL:** That's better. Arkoff got a lot of publicity over a proposed remake of TEENAGE WEREWOLF.

**HC:** He hasn't even got the money to make the picture! I feel so sorry for those kids in New York and LA getting dressed up as teenage werewolves. It was just to get his name in print. He's got a publicist



Herman Cohen

working for him, and he's got to get him publicity all the time.

**JL:** Sounds like you're not too happy with Mr. Arkoff.

**HC:** Sam Arkoff was vice-president of AIP. They were my distributors. I constantly have to write letters to various magazines, including Variety and The Hollywood Reporter, telling them he had nothing to do with the production whatsoever, that the only member of AIP who had any creative input on any of my pictures was James H. Nicholson. Sam Arkoff gets publicity wherever he goes; he claims he produced so many pictures, which he never did. Let me tell you what happened with David Letterman's show, right? Arkoff was booked to come on just before Halloween, because of I WAS A TEENAGE WEREWOLF and the Edgar Allan Poe pictures that Roger Corman did. I got a tip from a friend of mine in New York, who knows Letterman's Gal Friday. I called, I talked to David's producer, I faxed the credits of the picture. Well, when Sam Arkoff came on for the interview, David Letterman gave him such a brush, he was in and out in four minutes! Sam gave David a cigar. David said, "Thank you for the cigar. Well, Sam, I'm sorry, but we're late tonight." (Laughs)

**JL:** I've purposely skipped past one of your films, because we want to devote extra space to it. I'll bet you know which one.

**HC:** A STUDY IN TERROR. Have I got some great stories to tell you....

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Next: Sherlock Holmes versus Jack the Ripper!



In PHILO VANCE'S SECRET MISSION (1947), Alan Curtis (pictured with Sheila Ryan) was a tough-guy Philo Vance in the tradition of Hammett's Sam Spade and Chandler's Philip Marlowe.

## PHILO VANCE

*Continued from page 97*

puppets who carry out his orders. The puzzle has greater interest for the typical writer and his readers than do the people. Wright summed up this appeal when he declared, in a 1927 essay, "There is no more stimulating activity than that of the mind; and there is no more exciting adventure than that of the intellect." Vance's emotional austerity is consistent with this outlook. "Until we can approach all human problems," Vance declares in his first case, "...with the clinical aloofness and cynical contempt of a doctor examining a guinea pig strapped to a board, we have little chance at getting at the truth." Appropriately, Wright's literary style is a straightforward presentation of concrete details; he even supplements verbal statements with diagrams of the rooms where the murders took place.

At the same time, Wright rejects one key element of the detective tradition in which he has chosen to work—the use of factual details as clues that lead to the crime's solution. Vance disdains deductions based on such evidence. He assumes that a criminal would be clever enough to devise misleading clues or to avoid leaving clues that point to himself (and he is correct, because his quarry invariably has "superior intellect and astoundin' ingenuity"). Vance also denies the usefulness of motive, for an innocent person might have one and a guilty person might not seem to. "Even facts," he asserts, "sometimes lie damnable." The traditional detective puts his faith in facts, but Vance does not.

Still, knowing that his readers expect to be impressed with the detective's skill at such standard deductions, Wright includes occasional examples. But Vance performs these tasks not to solve the case or identify the murderer, but to show that the police have made a wrong assumption, that their "sweet and charmin' faith in circumstantial evidence" has led them away from the truth. So he uses deduction to prevent Heath from arresting an innocent person or to show where the killer has tried to give a false impression.

*Paul M. Jensen, who teaches film appreciation at SUNY-Oneonta, is the author of Boris Karloff and His Films. His articles have appeared in various magazines.*

Logic, he explains, "often leads one irresistibly to a false conclusion."

Having discarded the traditional use of logic, Vance employs the psychology of human behavior to solve his cases. Drawing on his own background as an art critic, Wright has Vance compare a crime to a painting, asserting that in each case the creator will reveal "the imprint of his personality." The way an act was done "is a direct expression of a man's personality and bears the inevitable impress of his nature" and "no two natures are exactly alike." Thus, the "truth can be learned only by an analysis of the psychological factors of a crime and an application of them to the individual. The only real clues are psychological—not material."

But Vance's concept of psychology is as scientific as deductions based on clues, leaving no room for the unpredictable. Such an analysis of the crime, Vance declares, will reveal "with almost mathematical surety" the criminal's personality. "There are no mysteries originating in human beings," he claims, "...only problems. And any problem originating in one human being can be solved by another human being."

Vance's belief that all is knowable, even human nature, offers a comforting security, but his premise is dubious, at best, and Wright cannot really make it convincing. Vance's conclusions may be satisfying, as when he says about one suspect, "It's psychologically possible he would have done it, and psychologically impossible he would have done it the way it was done." However, to reach such conclusions he resorts to generalizations of questionable universality. "All clever, scheming men with a sense of their own inferiority are inclined toward intense jealousy," he declares, and women who burn incense "are invariably sentimental." If anything is certain about human beings, it is that they contain unexpected inconsistencies, so although Vance's generalizations have some validity, they are only acceptable with the "all" and the "invariably" removed.

Wright sets out to accomplish the impossible and, although he sometimes creates the impression of succeeding, his basic failure is inevitable. Yet it is at this point that Wright's novels become most interesting, for, despite his intention, the author cannot help himself, and so ventures into more intriguing depths. Imperceptibly, the simplistic overconfidence of the classic puzzle-solver slips into the uncertainty and ambivalence associated with hard-boiled private eyes.

In the first novel, Vance decides on the murderer's identity in the first five minutes of his inquiry (but, of course, doesn't divulge it until much later). Soon, however, he loses that kind of omniscience. Already, in the second book, Vance says, "We're moving—though in what direction I can't even guess." Now and then he admits that mankind, "like life, is infinitely complex" and that there is "no such thing as a straight line. All lines are curved."

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Wright's shift in emphasis alters the detective's investigation from a retroactive consideration of past events to an evolving series of present-time interactions, through which Vance unearths relationships and personalities that help him discover a design amid the chaos of events and emotions. In his questioning, Vance prods the other characters with assumptions and with his manner, using whatever ploy seems appropriate, sometimes building their confidence, sometimes provoking their anger—always in the hope that they will make a slip and reveal some useful fact or personal characteristic. A suspect's physical manner and the actions that result from the conversation have become as important as his actual statements.

Each case involves uncovering a network of hidden relationships, and when the guilty party—the murderer—is exposed, that does not necessarily mean that the other characters are "innocent." Most of them remain interesting because they have their own separate guilts and weaknesses, flaws and vulnerabilities. In *Benson* the victim's life was a tangle of wronged women and angry men; in "Canary" the victim had been blackmailing her lovers, many of them ostensibly respectable married men.

The pervasiveness of guilt becomes especially evident in the third novel, *The Greene Murder Case*, which focuses on a single family permeated by mutual hatred. Essentially, there are no innocent people, only people who do not put their urges into action by committing murder. In *The Bishop Murder Case*, everyone "has some pet privacy that he's afraid will leak out." *The Dragon Murder Case* features another group of subtly "perverted psychological combinations." The Llewellyn family in *The Casino Murder Case* has "too much rotten money," which inspires contempt and jealousy in its members. In *The Garden Murder Case*, Vance sums up the situation concisely: "One never knows where family affairs and murder overlap." By this point, Wright has virtually released his always tenuous grip on psychology's scientific predictability, and Vance declares, "Crime is entirely personal and therefore incompatible with generalizations or laws."

In this way, Wright anticipates the realistic style of the private-eye novel, which emphasizes human interaction and, as Raymond Chandler wrote in a 1944 essay, "the gradual elucidation of character." This type of detective does not stay on the haughty periphery, but becomes a participant in the situation, a catalyst who disrupts the balance of relationships and uncovers a wide range of guilts and corruptions, both criminal and personal.

Dashiell Hammett wrote hard-boiled stories during the 1920s, but the realistic style did not become prominent until the publication of his novel *The Maltese Falcon* in 1930. Raymond Chandler's short stories, published first in 1933, refined and developed Hammett's approach, and this new style reached its peak in Chandler's first novel, *The Big Sleep*, published in 1939. Hammett and Chandler consciously reacted against the intellectual fantasy of the classic detective novel, with Wright clearly a part of that rejected group. In 1944, Chandler dismissed Philo Vance as "probably the most asinine character in detective fiction;" he never realized that Vance anticipated many of the elements brought to brilliant fruition by Chandler himself.

In fact, the families in Vance's cases have much in common with the Sternwoods in *The Big Sleep*, except that Chandler evokes the atmosphere of corruption, whereas Wright merely states that it exists. Wright's unconscious influence on Chandler may also be seen in more specific ways; for example, Dr Lindquist in *The "Canary" Murder Case*, a quack psychiatrist who runs a private sanitarium, reappears in Chandler's *Farewell, My Lovely* (1940), divided into the quack Jules Amthor and the sanitarium head, Dr. Sonderborg.

Vance also shares with Chandler's private eye, Philip Marlowe, a highly personal morality. Vance sometimes sympathizes with the guilty, and in "Canary" he allows a killer to commit suicide rather than suffer the indignities of arrest and trial. In *Greene*, he says that he doesn't care if the police arrest the murderer, but adds that it's "no more than humane" to save innocents from arrest. He also describes Mrs Greene, a murder victim, as "a most detestable woman. The world will not bemoan her loss." At the end of *Bishop*, when the killer prepares a poisoned drink, Vance switches glasses, thus deliberately "executing" the man.

Vance's cynicism runs deeper than Marlowe's ("Nothing really matters" in "this illusion we call life," he declares), but both men question the legal system's effectiveness and have a view of humanity that, if not misanthropic, is without illusions. In "Canary," Vance speaks about the "many dark recesses of man's unexplored nature" and asserts, "Everyone's a murderer at heart."

Also like the best private eyes, Vance makes incidental observations about the world around him. After surveying the room in which Alvin Benson died, Vance declares, "It's a clear case of justifiable homicide by an outraged interior decorator." He comments on news reports which "inflame the public's morbid imagination," notes the declining quality of his Régie cigarettes, praises the days when "homes were built for permanency and comfort," laments the "tasteless, standardized cookery of America," and bemoans that the "American aesthetic credo is: Whatever's big is beautiful." After praising the honesty of Dr. Doremus, the city's medical examiner, he adds with mock surprise, "and to think he's a public servant of our benevolent government!" Such comments are not far removed from the wisecracks of Philip Marlowe.

Chandler rightly claimed that the kind of mind that constructs an intricate puzzle is not the kind that could create "lively characters, sharp dialogue, a sense of pace and an acute use of observed detail." Willard Huntington Wright exists as an unlikely, one-of-a-kind case. He was not the best builder of puzzles, but he was reasonably good at it. His characters' hidden facets are not as unexpected as they might be, nor do they lie very far beneath the surface, but they are interesting nonetheless. What counts in the Philo Vance novels is not the puzzle or the character development, but the contrast and combination of these two elements. Their interactions, sometimes supportive and sometimes conflicting, intrigue the reader, while keeping him a little off balance. Potentially, they could do the same for film viewers.

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## INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE

Continued from page 33

brilliantly-directed scene, after a slow buildup, they suddenly swarm over her, like insects—not merely in human, but another species, with yards of black silk robes rustling as the victim disappears under the frenzied mass.

In this and other visually gorgeous scenes, the special effects and cinematography, highly advanced without calling attention to themselves, serve the film rather than the other way around. Lestat's 15-second transformation is a stunner, with transitions too slick to detect. (Cruise becomes a hideously sunken shock-head that couldn't possibly be a living actor.)

The last half hour of the final cut, while tighter and more dramatic than the earlier script, departs significantly from it and from Rice's novel. To the film's detriment, Lestat never appears in Paris. In his last, darkly erotic meeting with Armand, Louis teases by moving in very close, as if he's going to kiss Armand on the

lips. Then he coldly withdraws. Instead of traveling for years with Armand, Louis leaves Paris alone.

Louis has described Lestat to Molloy as a pathetic wretch, stuck in the past, in New Orleans, where he eats rats and cringes from artificial light. However, Lestat resurrects his wicked old self at the end, inviting comparison with *The Vampire Lestat*, the second novel of the series, in which Lestat tells readers that Louis misrepresented him.

Neil Jordan changed the film's ending at the last minute, making for a huge improvement over the trite jump-out scene in the script. (Although Anne Rice gets the only onscreen script credit, Jordan's name appears on early drafts of essentially the same script.) For those who haven't seen the climax, we won't reveal it—but let's just say that the ending sets up the expected sequel perfectly, and that the inspired choice of a rock 'n' roll song for the closing credits (if not the inspired choice of that song's performers) leaves the audience thirsty for more.



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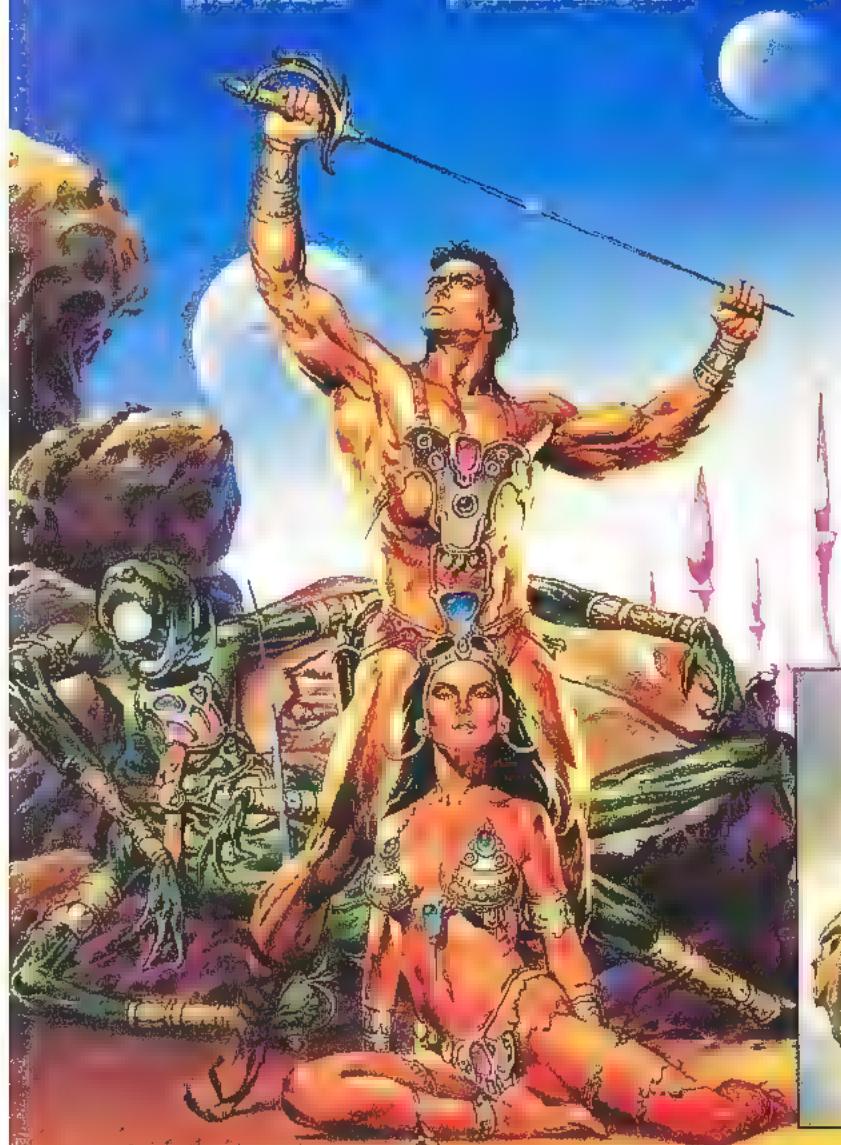
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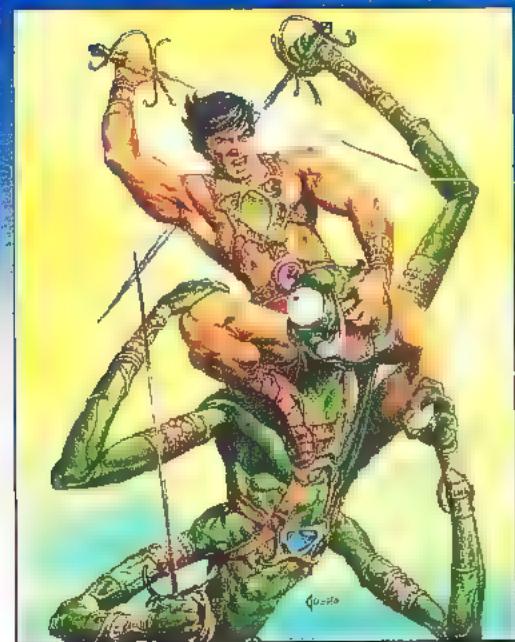
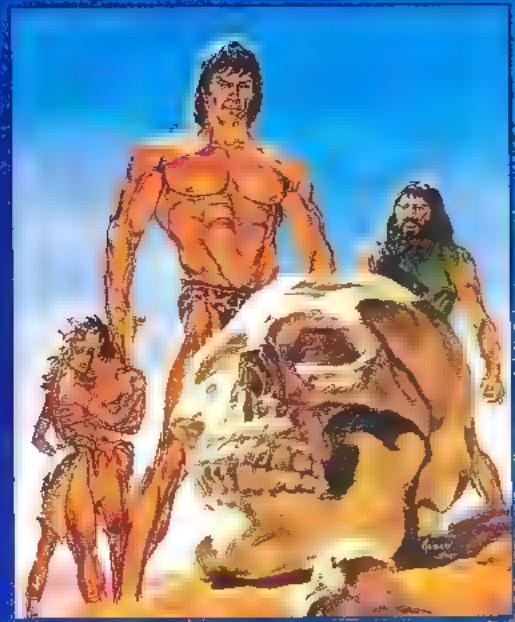
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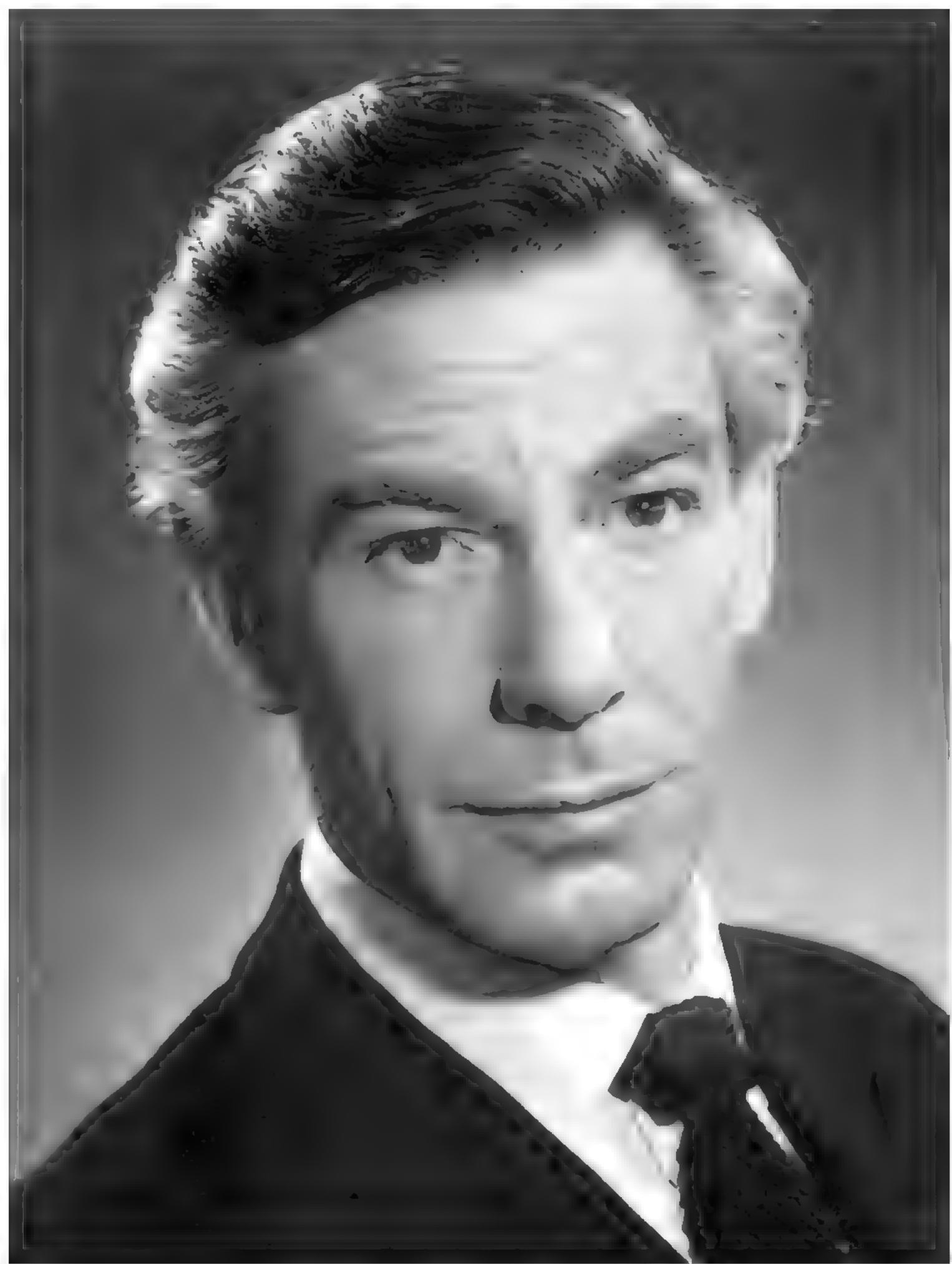














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A PHILo VANCE MYSTERY

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DAH DIP

# THE BISHOP MURDER CASE

FANG AND  
CLAW  
KILLERS  
STALK THE  
CITY  
STREETS!

COLOR



# BLACK ZOO

WRITTEN BY — GOUGH COOPER LAUREN GREY









A black and white portrait of Michael Caine. He is wearing a dark, patterned jacket over a light-colored shirt. His face is partially obscured by shadow, giving him a mysterious appearance. In the upper right corner of the image, there is a handwritten signature that reads "Michael Caine".

*Michael  
Caine*

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PROLOGUE FILM



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STORY BY RICHARD COOPER

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